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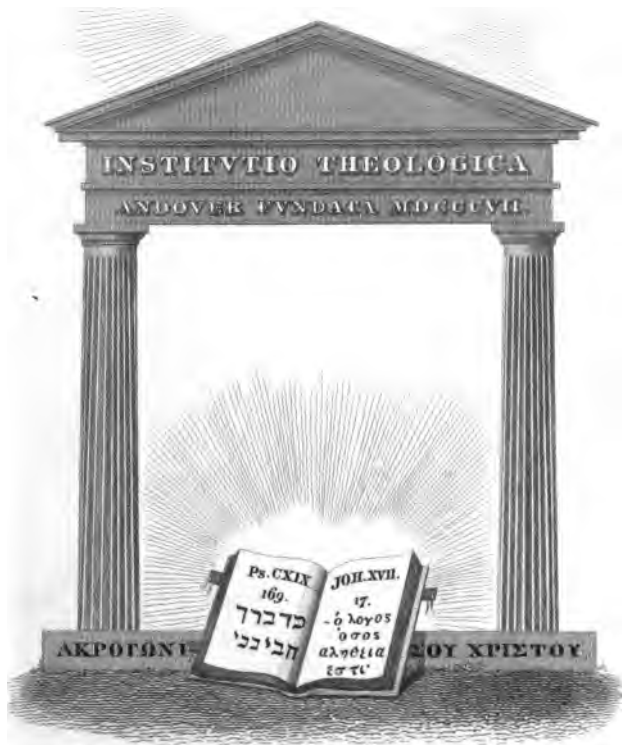


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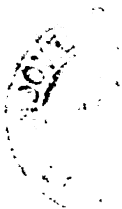
BY
A COUNTRY PASTOR,
AUTHOR OF
'LECTURES ON THE PARABLES,' 'LECTURES ON THE SCRIPTURE
REVELATION OF A FUTURE STATE,' ETC.

Richard Whately.]

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TO
THE PARISHIONERS OF HALESWORTH,
THESE LECTURES,
THE CHIEF PART OF WHICH WERE ORIGINALLY
COMPOSED FOR THEIR USE,
ARE INSCRIBED,
WITH FERVENT PRAYERS FOR THEIR PRESENT AND
ETERNAL WELFARE,
BY THEIR SINCERE FRIEND,
THE AUTHOR.

PREFACE

THESE Lectures were for the most part composed originally for the use of the same Country-congregation, to which those others were addressed which have been already published.*

That Congregation consisted of some, indeed, of the educated, but many more of the less-educated classes. They accordingly contain no abstruse disquisition, or learned research, but are made, as far as possible, plain and practical. They were for the most part composed during a period of painfully-trying anxiety; and were afterwards revised and arranged in a time of most severe affliction. They contain accordingly

* On a *Future State*, On *Good and Evil Angels*, On the *Apostles*, and On the *Parables*.

some of those reflections which one would wish to impress on the mind, and to cherish in the heart, on such occasions. And perhaps they may, through the divine blessing, help to suggest to others some topics of consolation or of support under affliction.

They were found intelligible, and in some instances, it is hoped, useful, to persons of various classes. And it is with the hope that this usefulness may be further extended, that they are now published.

CONTENTS.

LECTURE I.	
EFFICACY OF PRAYER	PAGE 1
LECTURE II.	
THE PRAYER OF FAITH	12
LECTURE III.	
WHAT THINGS ARE TO BE PRAYED FOR	32
LECTURE IV.	
PRAYER FOR ONE ANOTHER.....	63
LECTURE V.	
PRIVATE PRAYER	86
LECTURE VI.	
PUBLIC WORSHIP	105
LECTURE VII.	
CELEBRATION OF THE LORD'S SUPPER	121
LECTURE VIII.	
FAMILY PRAYER.....	138
APPENDIX (A).	
NOTE	153
APPENDIX (B).	
FAMILY PRAYERS	156
PREFACES ..	157
THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER :—	
I. EASTER DAY	158

	PAGE
II. SUNDAY EVENING.....	159
III. THURSDAY EVENING.....	161
IV. FRIDAY	162
V. FRIDAY MORNING	164
VI. SATURDAY MORNING.....	165
VII. SATURDAY EVENING.....	166
VIII. A MORNING PRAYER.....	168
IX. A MORNING PRAYER.....	169
X. A MORNING PRAYER.....	170
XI. A MORNING PRAYER.....	172
XII. AN EVENING PRAYER	173
XIII. AN EVENING PRAYER	174
XIV. AN EVENING PRAYER	176
COLLECTS	178
HYMNS :—	
THE LORD'S PRAYER.....	184
EVENING HYMN	185
HYMN	186
CHRISTMAS HYMN	187
HYMN	189
'HEAVENWARD'	191
'I AM THE WAY, AND THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE'...	192
BURIAL HYMN.....	193

LECTURES ON PRAYER.

LECTURE I.

Efficacy of Prayer.

THE practice of Prayer seems to be something quite natural to plain unlearned simple-minded men, unused to deep reflections and inquiries. As soon as such persons come to believe that there is some superhuman Being capable of hearing them, and of granting what they want, they naturally apply to him with petitions, just as they would to an earthly Superior.

And accordingly, we find all Pagans, ancient and modern, offering up prayers to the god or gods they believe in. The gods indeed that are worshipped by many of the Pagan nations are such as we should rather describe as evil Demons. And many of those Pagans are said to believe in a benevolent Being whom it is needless to pray to, as they suppose he will do them good *un-asked*; and accordingly all their prayers

are addressed to another Being, of an opposite character, to prevail on him not to hurt them. But even these prayers imply that the Demon they address is not a Being of pure unmixed malevolence; since, then he would be inexorable, and it would be useless to supplicate him at all.

So natural (as I have said) does prayer appear to be, that we find it was regularly practised by the Israelites of old, although it was not enjoined by the Mosaic Law, as an habitual duty. That Law gives precise directions for various sacrifices and ceremonial observances; but makes no mention of Prayer, except on an occasion occurring but once every three years, on which the Israelite was directed to invoke God's blessing on his People. And probably the reason why there was no injunction for the habitual practice of Prayer, was, that there was no *need* for such an injunction; the people practising that duty of their own accord, without any command.

This being the case, it may seem at first sight something strange that the Lord Jesus should so often and so very earnestly have dwelt on the duty of prayer, as we see He

did. For in most of the rest of his teaching we find Him dwelling chiefly on the duties which his hearers were the most apt to *neglect*, and correcting any errors into which they had fallen. But the subject of prayer is an exception to his usual practice. His hearers were *not* neglectful of it, though it had not been enjoined in their Law; and yet He dwells on it very strongly.

The reason of this probably was, that He was speaking not so much for the sake of his immediate hearers, as for those who should come after them;—not so much for the time then present, as for future Ages. For though, as I have said, prayer is quite natural to a simple unreflecting mind, when men come to reason and inquire more thoughtfully, doubts and objections are likely to arise. It will be likely to occur to the mind of many, that since the Most High ‘knows all our necessities before we ask,’ He cannot need that we should remind Him of them:—that since He knows what is best for us, far better than we do ourselves, we ought to trust entirely to Him to grant us what is right, without our asking for it;

and that it may even seem presumptuous for men to think that the Almighty can be prevailed on to alter his all-wise decrees in consequence of our entreaties.

I am not entering on the question, now, whether there is any good reason for these conclusions; but I am speaking of the fact, that such reasonings are likely to take place, and do take place, among persons of an inquiring and reflective mind.

Accordingly there has come down to us a prayer to that effect by an ancient Greek Poet, and which has been translated by an English one:—

‘Great Jove, this one petition grant;
Thou knowest best what mortals want;
Asked or unasked, what’s good supply;
What’s evil, to our prayers deny.’

Now it is plain that this goes to put a stop, not only to all *other* prayers, but to Prayer altogether; since if the Being on whom we depend is equally ready to give what we need, whether asked or not, it can be of no use to pray to him at all.

Our Lord accordingly, who ‘knew what is in Man,’ foresaw and provided against the objection I have been speaking of, by

encouraging, and commanding, and teaching us to pray. He does not, you will observe, keep out of sight God's knowledge of our wants, though He does not make that a reason against praying, but the reverse. 'Your Heavenly Father [says He] knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask; after this manner therefore pray ye.' But his promises are made not to our necessities, but to our supplications. He does not say 'Need, and ye shall have; want, and ye shall find,' but, 'ask, and ye shall have; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you.' Though God knows our wants beforehand, our *consciousness* of those wants, and of our dependence on Him for their relief, and our humble petitions for that relief,—these He cannot know, if they do not exist at all. Even so, any one who withdraws into the shade, causes the Sun,—though he cannot change the Nature of the heavenly luminary—no longer to shine on him; and if he removes into the sunshine, he again causes it to shine on him. And in like manner, there is no reason, in the unchangeableness of God's nature, why the repentant sinner who tears away the veil of indifference

or prejudice, should not be again blessed with the sunshine of divine favour.

But as for what has been said by some about the unalterable divine decrees, you should observe that if these cannot be altered by anything we can *say*, neither can they, by anything we can *do*; so that by the same rule that would exclude *prayer*, all regard to our *conduct* would be excluded also, and obedience or disobedience to the divine laws would be equally a matter of indifference.

But there is no reason to believe in any such unalterable decrees. God's decree is, to be 'a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him,' and not of those who refuse to seek Him. Our prayers do not indeed change his purpose; but his very purpose is, to regard those who humbly apply to Him as fitter objects of his bounty than those who will not do so. And since Prayer is—as He has taught us—one part of our duty, it cannot lower his divine majesty to bestow his favour rather on those who seek to practise their duty, than on those who neglect it.

Some however who talk about unalterable

divine decrees, seem to forget that if *all* things are fixed and fated, our *prayers* and our actions must be as much so, as the events that befall us. The benefits conferred, and the *petitions* for those benefits, must be alike predestined, the one as well as the other. And if we believe that God governs all things by his Providence, it is plain that no one event that occurs can be *more* '*providential*' than every other.*

There are some persons however who endeavour in a different way to meet the objection—such as it is,—that is drawn from the supposed unchangeable divine decrees. They speak of the change produced in *our own mind* by the act of prayer, as the *only* effect produced by it. And in this view there is some truth, with a mixture of error. For it is true that prayer does tend to produce an effect in the worshipper's own mind; though it is not true that this must be the *only* effect.

* It is an error which many persons inconsiderately fall into, to speak of such and such an occurrence being '*providential*;' as if others were *not* so; in short, as if God governed the world only on some rare occasions.—See *Lessons on the History of Religious Worship*.

It certainly is true that if a man fervently prays for strength to lead a virtuous life, to some Being whom he believes to be able and willing thus to strengthen him, a virtuous disposition will be cherished in his mind, by thus earnestly dwelling on such thoughts. And if he fervently prays to be fortified against temptations to covetousness, or intemperance, or any other evil propensity, an abhorrence of such sins will thus be generated in his mind. And so in other such cases.

But any one who considers this change in our own mind as the *only* possible effect that any prayer can produce, should consider, that, to *him*, and to all who take this view, Prayer, properly so called, must be totally impossible. He may indeed put his meditations and his resolutions into the *form* of a prayer; but it is plain that no one can possibly offer up a real *petition*, except to some Being whom he may expect in some degree to influence by that petition. As long indeed, as he *has* this expectation,—even supposing it to be an erroneous one—he may pray sincerely and heartily; and by so doing he may produce an effect on his

own mind. But the moment he is convinced that his prayer is not really heard—that the Being he had been addressing is one that either cannot, or will not, pay any regard to it, it is plainly impossible he can *continue* to offer up the prayer; and consequently he cannot continue to experience the effect of it on himself.

A Pagan, for instance, who should be a sincere worshipper of the Sun or the Moon, or of the heathen god Mars, and who was convinced that that supposed god could inspire him with courage and patriotism, might offer up fervent prayers, and might really, by that very act, become more valiant in fighting for his country. But as soon as ever he was convinced of his worship being founded in error, he could not possibly continue to pray to any such pretended god.

Now as far as regards the efficacy of Prayer it evidently makes no difference whether it be addressed to an idol, or to the true God, if it can, in neither case, have any influence at all on the Being it is addressed to, but only on the mind of the petitioner. For whether that Being be one

that *cannot*, or one that *will* not, hear and grant the petition, comes to the same thing.

It is plain therefore that that view I have been speaking of, though it represents Prayer as beneficial to those who do *not* take such a view, makes Prayer quite impossible to those who do;—to those who believe that no prayer can have any effect at all, except by fixing the mind of the petitioner on certain thoughts, from the very act of praying.

But the notion I have been speaking of is one that is completely at variance with the express promises in Scripture, that our prayers offered up in Christ's Name, will be heard, for his sake, by our Heavenly Father. We are taught clearly that though it is true that the very act of praying does so operate on the mind as to bring us into a more fit state for the divine Spirit dwelling in us and helping our infirmities, yet He who cannot deceive has promised that He will 'draw nigh unto them that draw nigh unto Him.'

As for the precise degree in which, in each particular case, this divine help has been granted,—how far in each instance,

God's Spirit has been working in us, in answer to our prayers,—this is what we cannot determine with certainty. It is a matter in which 'we walk by faith and not by sight.' We must never presume to pronounce positively that 'the Spirit moveth us' to say or to do so and so. All that we can be certain of, is, that '*every* good and perfect gift is from above,' and that whatever there may be that is right in our desires and our conduct, must be a divine gift. But if we have faith in God's assurances, we cannot but trust that He does really, in the strict and proper sense of the word, hear and grant our petitions for those things which are the most really worth praying for. We may therefore 'draw near in full assurance of faith, and come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need.' (Heb. iv. 16.)

LECTURE II.

The Prayer of Faith.

ALL who are at all acquainted with the New Testament must have observed that in many places we are taught to offer up prayers *with faith*. Our Lord's words are 'Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you: for, every one that asketh, receiveth; and he that seeketh, findeth; and to him that knocketh, it shall be opened.' (Matt. vii. 9, 10.) And in another place [Matt. xvii. 20], we find Him telling his Disciples that if they have but the smallest particle of faith,—'faith as a grain of mustard-seed,'—they shall have power to remove mountains, and nothing shall be impossible to them. And again, He tells them [Mark xi. 24] that when they pray they are to believe that their petitions will be granted, and then they shall receive what they ask. He tells them also [John xv. 16] that whatsoever they shall

‘ask the Father in his Name, He will give it them;’ and that if two of them shall ‘agree together touching something they shall ask, it shall be granted.’ (Matt. xviii. 19.)

Now these passages are liable to be dangerously misunderstood by the inconsiderate, who read the Bible, with reverence, indeed, but without any exercise of their common sense in understanding its meaning, and without any care to compare one passage with another, so as to make Scripture its own interpreter. But the Holy Scriptures were designed not for the thoughtless and inattentive reader, but for rational Beings who are willing to study carefully, and seek for the true meaning.

Some however there have been who have inferred from some of our Lord’s words, that *all* Christians, if not wanting in faith, would be gifted with miraculous powers; and that it is only from our deficiency in faith that we are unable to perform the same wonders as the Apostles.* And some

* In some of the notes from Jortin and Hammond, (on Mark xi.) that are printed in the Bible published by the Christian Knowledge Society, these commentators seem to see no difficulty in the passage, and interpret it in a manner that would lead to such a conclusion.

indeed have gone so far as to fancy, or to pretend, that they did possess the miraculous gift of Tongues, or that they had some other superhuman powers. And others, again, it is to be feared, from finding that no miraculous power is now granted to those who pray for it, are thus led to a total distrust of God's promises generally, and even to a rejection of all religion.

But you may see plainly from the Scripture-narrative, that the Apostles themselves had not—like the Lord Jesus—an *unlimited* miraculous power. It appears that they could only exert such power when they received an express commission to do so;—when it was intimated to them,—whether by the spoken words of their Lord openly uttered, or by some unmistakeable inward sign—that they were authorized and commanded to perform a miracle. And they were required to have full faith in such an intimation when it did take place. If they doubted, the power forsook them. And they seem to have fully understood this. They interpreted what their Master said concerning the faith that would enable them to work a miracle, as having reference to

that particular faith which I have been speaking of, and not to the general belief in Jesus as the Christ.

All this we may, I think, plainly learn from the narrative of Peter's walking on the water. We read that when Jesus appeared to them on the lake, Peter did not immediately step on to the waves to meet Him; nor was he rebuked for want of faith in not doing so. But he said, '*bid* me come unto thee on the water.' He seems to have fully understood that his Master's command was *necessary*, and was *sufficient*, to give him the power. 'Jesus said to him, *come*;' and he at once understood that this command gave him the power; and he then accordingly stepped on to the water. But when the boisterous wind and waves caused him to fear and doubt, and his faith failed, he began to sink; and Jesus stretched forth his hand to save him; rebuking him at the same time for his failure in faith: 'O thou of little faith, wherefore didst thou doubt?' (Matt. xiv. 28-31.)

This narrative, then, will furnish a key to all the accounts we read, of miracles wrought by the Apostles. It shows us, when, and

how, they were gifted with miraculous powers, and what kind of faith it was that was connected with those powers. And accordingly we find that there were many occasions on which we cannot doubt that they would have wrought a miracle, had their power to do so been unlimited. When the Apostle James for instance, the brother of John, was put to death by Herod; and when the first Martyr, Stephen, was murdered, we cannot doubt that the Apostles would gladly have delivered them, or have restored them to life. But neither Peter—who on one occasion did raise the dead—nor any of the rest, had such power granted them. Yet we do not find that they were rebuked as wanting in faith. When, again, Peter himself was imprisoned and under sentence of death, we read that the Disciples earnestly prayed for his release; and though he was not himself endued with a miraculous power of releasing *himself*, the prayers of the Church were heard, and the Lord sent an Angel to deliver him. But no one can doubt that prayers to the like effect had been offered up in behalf of James also, and for Stephen, for whom no deliver-

ance from death was granted. So also we find the Apostle Paul, who so many times miraculously healed the sick, on one occasion obliged to leave behind him one of his companions who was sick. And we find him speaking of some very trying affliction (whether some bodily disease, or whatever else it was, we are not told), which he calls a 'thorn in the flesh,' from which he besought the Lord thrice that he might be delivered; yet his petition was not granted. (2 Cor. xii. 7.)

It seems evident, therefore, that the faith which our Lord was speaking of as empowering the Disciples to work Miracles must have been,—and must have been understood by them to be—faith in such intimations of his Will as I have been speaking of.

As for the particular mode in which, on each occasion, such an intimation was conveyed to any one, this is a point on which we have in general no information given us; though we are enabled to understand it (as I have already said) from the record of the case of Peter's walking on the Water. But it is quite evident that the power of working a miracle, and the promise of

granting such power when prayed for, must have been always understood as bearing a limitation. The promise and the prayer must have been always under the condition of its being something conformable to the designs and decrees of divine Wisdom: 'If we ask anything *according to his Will*, [says the Apostle John] He heareth us.' (1 John v. 4.)

But our Lord's usual practice was—as every one who is well acquainted with Scripture must have observed—to give his instruction in very strong and unqualified language, laying down many precepts which any person of common sense would understand to be given not as what were to be observed always according to the very letter, but designed to convey in the most forcible way what kind of disposition we should strive to cultivate, and what should be our character and conduct generally. Thus we are taught to show a kind and helpful and liberal temper, by being told to 'give to every one that asketh, and to refuse nothing to a borrower.' (Matt. v. 42.) Now every one of the smallest particle of good sense must perceive, that if he were to

observe such a precept literally, by bestowing whatever he was asked for, without any regard to his own means, or to the need, and the desert, of the applicants, he would very soon have nothing left to give, and would be reduced to utter destitution. But every one understands the real meaning to be, that we should cultivate a bountiful and benevolent disposition. So also, a literal and exact compliance with the precepts about 'not resisting evil,' but submitting readily to wrongs, would go to deliver up all good men to any unscrupulous and merciless oppressor. To check all resentful feelings, and to exercise a patient and forbearing disposition, is evidently the duty designed to be taught. And it was a duty which the Apostle Paul, for instance, practised most admirably; though we find him on several occasions claiming his lawful rights as a Roman citizen [Acts xxii. 25], and protesting against illegal scourging. And in this we do not find that he is censured as a transgressor of his divine Master's commands.

In like manner, and with the same kind of qualification, we are to interpret what

our Lord says of the efficacy of faith in Prayer. To suppose a promise given unconditionally that we should obtain whatever we may ask for, would be to suppose that we should become *omnipotent*;—that the government of the universe is transferred from God to ourselves. And moreover, the literal and exact fulfilment, without any limitation, of the petitions in which two or three might agree, would, in many cases, be absolutely impossible; since it may happen—and doubtless often does—that different persons are disposed to wish for things different and inconsistent with each other. One party may be earnestly praying for a certain event to take place, while others are praying against it; so that *both* prayers could not possibly be granted. And many a man, again, will be likely to pray for some supposed good which would in reality be an evil; and which, therefore, it would be a greater mercy to withhold than to grant.

But our Lord's promises, and commands, are to be interpreted by his own words, when He says, 'Your Heavenly Father will give *good* things to them that *ask* Him.'

(Matt. vii. 11.) By which He implies both that Prayer is not *useless*, (which it would be, if God were equally ready to give to those who ask and to those who will not), and also that we are to trust fully in the wisdom and goodness of Him who knows best what is for our real benefit.

And to pray with this full confidence,—a confidence, not that we shall always receive the very things which we (perhaps ignorantly) are asking for, but that God will give us what is really best,—and what we should; ourselves, prefer, if we were sufficiently enlightened—this is a trial of our faith; and sometimes a very great trial; when we have to submit without murmur or distrust, to severe disappointments, and present afflictions. But our faith would not be tried at all—as it is manifestly the design of Providence it should be—if we constantly obtained, and saw others obtaining, whatever is earnestly prayed for. We should be walking by sight, rather than by faith.

The trials of faith, however, to which Man is subjected are far from being the same to all. And it appears, I think, that, generally speaking, in the earlier Ages of

the World, and in the earlier stages of each divine revelation, there was required a less far-seeing faith, if one may so speak,—less of faith in things very distant—than in after-times, and when men might be expected to be more advanced in faith. The rewards and the punishments held out,—the divine promises and warnings given,—and which men were required to believe in,—related, at first, to things near at hand; and gradually they were more and more required to have faith in things more remote.

And this corresponds with our own treatment of children at various ages. We require a child to believe in our promises and threats; but the faith thus called for relates more and more to what is at some distance, in proportion as he advances in years and in mind. A very young child can hardly be brought to think of to-morrow. He is promised the *immediate* reward of a toy or a sweetmeat, for good behaviour; and some immediate punishment is the penalty for disobedience. And the rewards and punishments must not only be immediate, but of a kind to affect the senses, and thus to be intelligible to the

infantine mind. If you were to offer him a piece of money, he would not understand the value of it. When he is a little older, he is brought to have faith in something a little further off. He can feel hopes and fears of the obtaining or the losing of a party of pleasure, or a prize, some days, or some weeks hence: though it would be in vain to talk to him about success or failure in after-life. And he would understand the value of a piece of coin; though if you were to offer him a draft on a Bank, of many times the value, he would not understand that. As he advances, he comes to understand the importance of exerting himself in his School or College-course, and preparing for an examination that is to take place two or three years hence. And afterwards he will come to have faith in things still more distant, and will act on the hopes and the fears of good or ill success in life, in whatever profession or occupation he enters on; and will be content to forego, for the sake of a distant good, many present gratifications.

The last and greatest point in the progress of faith, is, fully and practically to

believe in what relates to the next World, and to act with a view not to 'the things that are seen, which are temporal, but to the things which are not seen, which are eternal.'

And something of a like course is pursued by the most judicious Missionaries, in the training of the wildest savages; who are Beings that, though men in stature, are but little different in mind from very young children. To such Beings it would be vain to set forth, at the beginning, the Gospel-doctrines concerning the World to come. They are too thoughtless and improvident, at first, to till the ground, and sow it, in expectation of a harvest next year. But when they have been a little instructed, gradually, in some of the commonest arts of life, and have been brought to have faith in the ripening of corn, and the usefulness of storing up provisions for their wants, they then understand that their Missionaries are advising them wisely in the things of this World, and are trained to look forward more and more to the future, and to listen to the instruction given them in what relates to a future state.

And such seems to have been the plan of Providence in the earlier Ages;—in what may be considered the childhood of the human race;—and also in the first opening of each divine dispensation.

The Israelites, for instance, while under the leading of Moses, had rewards and punishments set before them of a temporal kind, and which were allotted to them *immediately*. When they cried for food, Manna was at once miraculously dispensed: when they were distressed with thirst, a stream was made to flow from a rock for their supply; and when they rebelled, they were immediately visited with death from pestilence or the sword.

Abraham, indeed, as well as Noah, and some such very eminent persons of old, were called on to show, and did show, faith in what was more remote. But such a gross-minded people as the common mass of the Israelites when they came out of Egypt, could only be influenced by what was close at hand.

Gradually they were trained to look forward a *little* further. When settled in the promised land, though they were still

under the system of temporal reward and punishment, these were less immediate, than during the time when the whole people were in the Wilderness. Their subjugation by enemies, or their deliverances, were sometimes delayed for several years. But still, it was in a man's life-time,—or at least in that of his children, that he was to look for that fulfilment of promises and threats.

Then again, the supernatural light called 'the Glory of the Lord,' or Shechinah, was at first displayed to *all the Israelites*, in the Red Sea, and in the Wilderness; but was afterwards seen only by the High-Priest in the Temple; and was ultimately withdrawn altogether. It was displayed on Jesus as a sign of his being 'God's beloved Son,' only at his baptism, and once again, to three of his Disciples, at his transfiguration on the Mount. He did not appear ordinarily (as ignorant painters often represent Him) with what is called a 'Glory' round his head; but men were required to believe on Him from his works and his words. And lastly, the mighty works are no longer displayed, which were the signs exhibited by

Him and his Apostles; and He is no longer present in bodily person, but requires us to believe that He is present by his Spirit, 'wheresoever we are gathered together in his name.' And while the system of temporal rewards and punishments is at an end, we are to believe that He will one day come to 'judge the world in righteousness;' and we are taught to look not 'to the things which are seen, which are temporal, but to the things which are not seen, which are eternal.'

Thus does the Human Race appear to have been gradually trained by Providence—even as we ourselves train an individual—to have, and to act on, more and more, what may be called a *provident* faith—a faith in what is remote. And accordingly, if we were, now, to call for, or to calculate on, and fully expect, an *immediate* answer to prayer for any temporal deliverance, or other good that we might ask, we should be calling for a return to a comparatively *childish* state;—for the restoration of an earlier kind of Dispensation. And this, we have seen, is what the Apostles themselves—gifted as they

were with miraculous powers—did not expect or seek.

They prayed indeed occasionally (among other things) for power to work a particular *miracle*; as we are plainly given to understand, in the case, for instance, of Peter's restoring Dorcas to life. For he came to the place when sent for, not, surely, without a hope of any thing but the sight of a corpse; yet without any announcement that he was about to work a miracle, or any full assurance that he would be enabled to do so; and we read that he 'kneeled down and prayed;' doubtless, that if God thought fit, this power might be granted him; and in that case it was; while in other instances, in which we must suppose (as I have above said) that similar petitions were offered up, the power was withheld.

But then, there was no impropriety in such petitions, *from them*. They were under a miraculous dispensation; and it was no undue presumption for a man who *had* miraculous powers, generally, to pray to be allowed to exercise such power on a particular occasion; though it *would* be presumption for *us* to pray for any miracle,

when we see plainly that it is not according to God's will that any sensible miracles should now take place.

But though we are, in this point, under a different Dispensation from the Apostles who lived in the Age of Miracle, our duty corresponds with theirs. We are to pray, in full faith, for whatever is *promised* to be granted to Prayer. Spiritual benefits we know that it is God's will to give us. 'If any man lack Wisdom' (says the Apostle James, [i. 5] meaning, evidently, spiritual Wisdom) 'let him ask of God,—in faith, nothing wavering;' and such a prayer he assures us will be heard.

But in all that is *not* promised,—as for some particular temporal blessing or deliverance—our prayers should be *conditional*, and under a reservation; such as 'not my will, but thine be done:' 'grant us this petition if Thou seest that it will be for our real benefit; if not, in thy Mercy withhold it; and enable us to submit without murmuring, and with full reliance on the divine goodness.'

But you must not *wait* for a full and perfect faith before you begin to call on

God at all. If you had fallen into a deep pit, or were shipwrecked, you would cry out loudly for help, if you were not *certain* that there was no human Being within hearing, and able to rescue you. And even so, if you believe at all in God, you should call on Him, praying, among other things, for that very faith in which you may feel yourself deficient; even as our Lord's immediate followers said to Him, '*Increase our faith!*' *Some* faith in Him they must have had; since else they would not have been his Disciples: but they needed, and asked for more. And so it must have been with the distressed father of the demoniac child (of whom we read in Mark ix. 24) who 'cried out with tears, Lord, I believe: help thou mine unbelief.' And in our case as well as in theirs we may trust that such a prayer, if heartily offered up, will be mercifully granted.

If then any one is asked why he does not remove mountains, or display any other miraculous gift, he may fairly answer '*I cannot: I have neither such power, nor any promise that any such will ever be given me in answer to prayer.*' But if he

is told to remove the oppressive mountain of some sinful habit, or to perform any other difficult duty, he must not say 'I cannot:' for he *is* promised strength for *this* task, if he prays for it in faith, and with importunity, and puts forth his own strenuous exertion, and uses vigilant care.

For we must *watch*, as well as *pray*, against temptation;—pray, as if *nothing* depended on ourselves; and watch, as if *every* thing depended on ourselves. And then such Prayer will be heard effectually.

LECTURE III.

What Things are to be prayed for.

NEXT to being fully persuaded of the importance of the *duty* of Prayer, and properly grateful for the high *privilege* of prayer,—of being permitted, and encouraged to address the Most High as a Father and a friend,—next to this, I say, comes the consideration of *what* things we ought principally to pray *for*;—what should be the chief purport of our addresses to God.

There are perhaps many who would be ready enough to pray, if they thought they could obtain of God riches and prosperity, health, long life, and bodily ease and comfort, and in short every kind of worldly enjoyment, by asking for it. These are the things their chief wishes are fixed on; and it is these which they either do pray for, in expectation of obtaining, or *would* pray for if they had such expectation. And not a few probably are discouraged altogether from ever making, in private, any hearty

and earnest petitions to the Almighty, from finding that no miracles are bestowed in these days, and that health and sickness, favourable and unfavourable seasons, success and failure in worldly business, attend both the devout and the ungodly alike: whence they are tempted to doubt whether it makes any difference to pray at all or not.

And one cause which I believe contributes not a little to this, is the careless application which so many Christians are accustomed to make, to themselves, of many parts of the Old Testament. They read there, of the Lord's dealings towards the Israelites under the Dispensation of the Mosaic Law, when the appointed reward of obedience was temporal prosperity, and the judgments denounced against transgressors, worldly calamities; the doctrine of a future state not having been then revealed; or at least, not revealed as any part of the sanction of the law:* they read, I say, of the righteous

* Compare the words of the pious King Hezekiah who lived before the time when 'Jesus Christ had brought life and immortality to light,' with those of the Apostle Paul, when each of them was speaking of death as apparently near at hand. Hezekiah's language is [Isaiah xxxix.] 'The grave cannot praise Thee; death cannot celebrate

prospering in every undertaking,—of riches and honour and length of days, bestowed on those who fear the Lord, and of their children, and children's children flourishing in peace; while the wicked are afflicted with want, oppressed by their enemies, and cut off with all their families; and then erroneously applying all this to Christians, in the present day, they expect deliverances and rewards for good men in this world, and are disappointed and shaken in faith, if they see the pious prematurely cut off, or afflicted all through life, and the irreligious prospering. And hence they perhaps end in doubting whether 'the eyes of the Lord are indeed over the righteous, and his ears open to their prayers;' and whether He is indeed 'a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him.'

Some again, are so rash as to proclaim, whenever any heavy calamity occurs, that

Thee; they that go down to the pit cannot hope for thy truth,' &c. On the other hand, Paul says, 'I have a desire to depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better.' 'To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain.' (Phil. i. 21, 23.) 'There is laid up for me a crown of glory, which the Lord, the righteous Judge will give me in that day.' (2 Tim. iv. 8.)

this is a divine judgment for some particular sin which they impute either to the sufferers themselves, or to the nation they belong to. They wholly overlook our Lord's declaration that the men who were slain by the fall of a tower were not to be accounted 'sinners above all that dwelt in Jerusalem.'* But if men would but study Scripture with any of the common sense which they employ in all other matters, they would plainly see that there is no promise of worldly prosperity made to Christians,—either as individuals or as nations. Wealth, and long life, and health, and success in the affairs of the

* Some very unwise Protestants maintained that the famine in Ireland was a judgment for the national sin of tolerating Romanists. And some Romanists maintained that it was a judgment for (what they account) *heresy*. Both parties were alike in having no ground for what they asserted. If indeed any one had *predicted* that calamity, and had declared by divine inspiration *why* it was sent (as Moses did, with respect to the earthquake which destroyed Korah [Numbers xvi. 28]), there would have been some ground for so speaking. But as it is, the calamity left the question between Protestants and Romanists just where it was: to be decided on other grounds.

Yet for pointing out this obvious truth, a christian Divine was publicly denounced by another as an unbeliever in Scripture !

present world, are nowhere held out to *them* as the reward of obedience, nor are any temporal judgments on sinners denounced as a penalty necessarily befalling them in this life. The views which the Gospel presents to us are far different, and far more awful.

True it is indeed that we are told that 'godliness' (*i. e.* a christian life) 'is profitable for all things, and has the promise of the life that now is, as well as of that which is to come.' But certainly this is not to be understood of any special interference of Providence (as in the case of the Israelites of old) to bring temporal prosperity or adversity on men according to their godly or ungodly conduct. It can relate only to the *general* course of events, as originally ordained throughout the whole world. For instance, that temperance should bring health, and intemperance disease, is a general rule, though not a universal one. And so, it is a general rule that honest industry will lead—when other things are equal—to more success in life than dishonesty and idleness. It is a general rule that kindness will procure the good-will of our neighbours,

and that unkindness will alienate them. And one who is temperate, and honest, and industrious, and benevolent, on christian principle, will generally—though not universally—reap those additional advantages in this life, and will so find ‘godliness profitable for all things.’

And that the promise does require to be so understood,—namely, as relating only to the advantages *generally* arising from good conduct, according to the natural course of things, and that such advantages are not to be *calculated* on as *certain*, but that the reverse is often to be met with,—this is what we learn both from the warnings and from the example of our Saviour Himself. He, the Founder of our Religion, Himself passed his life in hardships and persecutions, and ended it by being put to death as a malefactor. And He prepared his immediate followers for meeting with the like treatment. ‘If,’ said He, ‘they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you.’ And though all Christians are not called on to undergo *persecution* for the Gospel’s sake, we may be sure that the reward held out to them is not in this life. If we are the fol-

lowers of a Master who was crucified, and whose Apostles were persecuted, we cannot at least reckon worldly prosperity a mark of the divine favour.

But a day will come, as our Scriptures teach us, when 'we must all appear before the Judgment-seat of Christ;' and when immortal happiness will be awarded or denied to each of us. This is surely a far more awful prospect (though, as was remarked in the preceding Lecture, a more *distant* one) than that which was set before the Israelites of old. And therefore we have no reason to wonder that the extraordinary providence which *they* were placed under, should have been withdrawn; and that worldly prosperity and adversity should be *irregularly* distributed to Christians, who have the promises and threats of another world held out to them.

The state of things under which the Christian lives, and which forms his trial in this life, is described by our Lord in several Parables, and among others, by that of the 'Wheat and the Tares' (Matt. xiii.)*

* The word *Zizania*, which is translated 'Darnel' (the '*Lolium temulentum*' of botanists), a common weed in

‘The Kingdom of Heaven’—that is, the christian Church—is compared to a field in which a man sowed good seed; but an enemy came and sowed noxious weeds in it. His servants proposed to go and root them out; but he forbade them, lest in gathering up these, they should ‘root up with them the wheat also.’ Both were to be allowed to ‘grow together till the harvest,’ when the good seed was to be carefully stored up, and the bad, to be destroyed. Now you should observe, that under the Old Dispensation, the weeds *were*, in many instances, rooted out at once: that is, the rebellious were often cut off by temporal judgments, while the righteous were left to flourish. ‘Your eyes have seen what the Lord did because of Baal-peor: for all the men that followed Baal-peor, the Lord thy God hath destroyed them from among you. But ye that did cleave unto the Lord your God are alive every one of you this day.’ (Deut. iv. 3, 4.)

corn-fields, and which is the more difficult to get rid of, from its having much outward *resemblance*—which tares have not—to the wheat. The Parable therefore loses part of its force, in our Version.

But this was not to be the system under the Gospel. The Master (by whom Jesus represents Himself) tells his servants to let both grow together till the harvest. The separation of the faithful and the rebellious — ‘the children of the Evil one’ — is to be made at the Day of Judgment; and they are *then* to receive their respective portions.

Again, our Lord tells his disciples to ‘lay up for themselves treasures’ not on Earth, but in Heaven: for ‘where their treasure is, there will their heart be also.’ And He tells them not to ‘take thought [that is, according to the meaning of those words in ancient English, to be uneasily anxious] what they shall eat or drink;’ but to ‘seek first the Kingdom of God and his righteousness.’

Now if, in the face of all such instructions and warnings, men *will* persist in setting their hearts on the things of this world, and making those the chief object of their care and wishes, and hopes and prayers — if they *will* seek more for the goods, — or supposed goods, of this life (which, after all, are not promised to the Christian) than for those eternal goods

which are so incomparably more precious—they cannot complain if their prayers are not heard. They ‘ask, and have not, because [says the Apostle James] they ask amiss.’

Sometimes indeed it seems as if the wishes of a worldly-minded man *were* granted, to his loss. For if such a man attain the worldly success and prosperity which is the great object of his desires, he has, in fact, been visited with a heavy judgment. He is then the more likely to be wedded to the present life,—the life that after all must come to an end,—and to lay up no ‘treasure in Heaven,’ nor think or care at all about it. And hereafter that awful sentence will apply to him, ‘Remember that thou, in thy life-time, receivedst *thy* good things :’ those, that is, on which alone thy heart was fixed;—which alone thou didst value or care about.

But many times God in his mercy denies the wishes and prayers of those who are foolishly devoted to the present world, in order to remind them forcibly that we have here no abiding-place, but are on our journey towards a life that is to have no end.

It is no more than most men need, that they should be, if possible, weaned, by some mortifications and disappointments, from an excessive attachment to the things of this life; which, though they often complain of it, they still prize more than they ought. 'The world'—says one of the ancient Fathers—'is bitter, and yet it is loved: what would it be, if it were sweet?'

If any one then will but bestow a little attention on what our religion is, he will plainly see that worldly prosperity is no promised reward of piety, under the Gospel-system, nor mark of God's special favour; and he will see that we are not even fit judges *when* it is really good for us, and when not; or how much of it is good for us. For, any thing that would draw off our hearts from 'the kingdom of God and his righteousness,' would evidently be an evil.

Nay, even if the present life were the whole of our existence, still, wealth and power, and success, and health, and long life, would not necessarily be a good to every one who attains them, but only if he makes a right use of them. And it is re-

markable that this observation is made by one of the ancient Heathen Philosophers,* who knew nothing of a future life. For he, in one of his Moral Treatises, divides all goods into two kinds; the one class consisting of such things as he calls goods-in-themselves; the other, such as are *always* and necessarily goods. By the first, he understands such advantages as wealth, reputation, health, ability, and prosperity of every kind; which he says are goods in themselves, but not always a good to the possessor, since a man may convert them into an evil, by making a bad use of them. The other class, comprehending Virtue, and true Wisdom of every kind, are, he says, always goods to him who possesses them. And he adds that the former class—the goods of Fortune,—are what most men pursue and wish, and pray for, but that they ought not: they ought rather, says he, to pray that those things which are in themselves goods may prove goods *for them*, by their having the wisdom to use them aright.

* Aristotle.

All this, I say, is from a Heathen! What pity that so many Christians should have so much worse judgment than he, with so much better opportunities! that they should miss that road in the noon-day of the Gospel, which he perceived by the twilight of Reason!

But since there is another World—which the Writer I have cited had no notion of—how much less important, to Christians, must be the goods of the present world, and how much more danger of their proving evils to us, by withdrawing our thoughts from the concerns of the life to come!

If the Christian then ‘asks, and obtains not, because he asks amiss’—that is, because he prays too much for those temporal advantages to which his heart is already too much wedded,—it is through God’s mercy and wisdom that he fails to obtain what might tend to his eternal ruin. Let him amend his petitions, and they will be granted. For, our Heavenly Father, says our Saviour, will ‘give *good* things to them that ask Him.’

Ask Him therefore for such things as you are well assured *must* be goods, for *you*.

Especially you should pray to be duly impressed with a sense of the extreme *littleness* of this life, in comparison with eternity, and the comparative insignificance of the goods and evils of the present world, as contrasted with the gaining or the forfeiting of immortal happiness. This is what we can very readily *understand*, but what it is very difficult to *feel* as strongly as we ought. The difficulty is, from the *nearness* of that which is the less, while that which is infinitely the greater is unseen and more distant. It is thus that a cloud of a few acres in extent will often shut out from us the whole light of the Sun, which is a body immensely larger than the whole Earth. The Sun, again, will sometimes be totally eclipsed from us by the Moon; which is no bigger in comparison of it than a grain of Mustard-seed as compared with a man's head. But the Cloud or the Moon is near at hand; and the Sun is at an enormous distance. And we have need of much fervent prayer and earnest meditation to bring our minds to estimate rightly the things of time and those of eternity.

These are what we are sure cannot but

be for our good; and what, therefore, we may pray for in full confidence. Pray that God may ever dwell in your heart by his Spirit, and guide all your actions, and purify you in thought, word, and deed. Pray for a feeling of devout and heartfelt gratitude for benefits already received from the Giver of all good; for all the blessings of this life, ‘but *above all* for the redemption of the world by our Lord Jesus Christ, for the means of present grace, and for the hope of future glory.’ And return your hearty thanks for any deliverance from temptation, or any support under afflictions that you may have experienced. Pray that you may become daily like your Great Master ‘who left us an example that we should follow his steps;’—that you may ‘grow in grace and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour;’ that each year, and each day may find you a better christian than the last, more full of the hope of Heaven, and more fitted for admission into it. Pray that God will for Christ’s sake pardon all your sins,—that He will endue you with watchfulness and sound judgment to detect whatever is amiss in your life, and

with strength and resolution to shake it off. Pray for a mind to discern and to do God's will; and to be humbled with a sense of your own natural weakness and sinfulness, and to be guarded against all self-confident conceit of your own supposed goodness, and all spiritual pride in supposed divine favour;—those most dangerous deceits of the Evil One; who is willing enough that men should lead a virtuous life if he can but make them proud of it, and confident in their goodness; or that they should have a strong sense of religion, if their religion consist in holding, in a temper of spiritual pride, that they are especial favourites of Heaven, and looking down with arrogant disdain on their brethren.

Truly wise prayers then for spiritual blessings you may be sure will be heard and accepted if they are urged earnestly and perseveringly, through Christ's intercession. And the object of such prayers is one which cannot but be good to him who attains it; and a good which will endure to all eternity.

And as for the goods of this world, you should pray (according to the precept of

that ancient Heathen Philosopher) that such as may be bestowed on you may be indeed goods to *you*, and may not be turned into an evil, either by your making an ill use of them, or by setting your heart too much on them. And pray that God would grant you as much—only as much—of success and enjoyment in this world as He sees will be for your real benefit, and will prove no hindrance to your attainment of everlasting life.

And indeed God has appointed that such prayers shall be (as was pointed out in the first Lecture) *among* the means for their own fulfilment. An earnest supplication for divine grace to aid us, tends to prepare the heart for receiving that grace—for becoming what the Apostles call a ‘living stone of the Temple of the Holy Ghost.’ Any man, on the other hand, who prays for riches, for instance, or for health and life, may indeed have his prayer granted; but the prayer itself does not otherwise bring him the nearer to his object; but he who prays earnestly for the unspeakable riches of purity and piety of heart, and knowledge and love of God, is enriched in the very

act of Prayer, because his very devotion tends to improve him. He who seeks heartily for the health of his soul, is using one of the best remedies for its diseases, sin and indifference to God. If you confess to Him, humbly and honestly, your sins, and pray for his help to amend, you are weakening the hold that sin and Satan have on you. A sincere and heartfelt *wish* for virtue, is itself virtuous. And an earnest, longing, and devout supplication for the glories of Heaven, itself tends to make you heavenly-minded, and thus forward you on your course thither.

Although therefore it is an error (as was pointed out in the first Lecture) to say that Prayer is not really heard and granted, and that the *only* effect of it is on the mind of the worshipper (which would of course make it impossible for any one who believed this to be the case, really to pray at all), still it is true that *one* of the effects of such prayers as I have been speaking of, is, to conduce to their own fulfilment.

Now what effect have the promises made to Prayer in Scripture, on some who pro-

fess to believe in Scripture? If it were announced to any one of you—poor or rich—that a large sum of money had been left him, which he might have on applying for it, would you lose it for want of asking? If any one of you were labouring under some painful and dangerous sickness, and were well-assured that there was some one who possessed an infallible remedy, which he would freely bestow on any one who would apply earnestly for it, as in real need of relief, would you long allow yourself to linger under that disease for want of applying for the cure? Who, in short, would go without any worldly advantage or gratification, if he might have it for asking?

Yet when Christians are taught that God's favour in this life, and eternal happiness, after death, are offered to all who will but seek for them in earnest,—that the unspeakable riches of divine grace, and a cure for every evil and disease of the soul, are to be received by 'them that ask,'—and that the doors of Heaven itself will be 'opened to those that knock,'—how cold and languid are many of them in offering up supplications for such 'good things as

eye hath not seen, nor ear heard,' and in comparison of which all earthly goods are but dross.

Besides those who live on from year to year without any more thought of God than if his existence were a fable, and who seldom utter his Name, except to take it in vain—besides these, there are, I fear, not a few who are well satisfied with themselves for attending regularly at divine worship in Church, as if they were doing an honour and a favour to the Most High by such regularity; while perhaps they are thinking, great part of the time, of anything but devotion; or are satisfied with attending to the *Sermon*, as if the *prayers* were of little or no consequence. Others again, I fear, there are, who pray,—or at least *say* their prayers—on Sundays, but who seem to think that God claims but one day in seven, and that no thought of religion need come across them during the rest of the week. Some again, seem to think there is much benefit in repeating daily a form of prayer in which their heart is not engaged, though they, coldly and formally, utter the words. And others, again, if they do pray heartily

and earnestly for anything, pray chiefly for worldly goods ;—for health and prosperity for themselves and their friends, and are careless and languid in imploring the graces of the Holy Spirit, and the glories of another world; as if they had been commanded ‘Seek ye *first* what ye shall eat and what ye shall drink, and seek ye *last* the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness.’

Yet such persons perhaps keep their conscience easy by believing in their own piety, and trusting to the mercy of God. They confess indeed, in general terms, that they are ‘miserable sinners;’ but their sins cause them no misery, nor give them real uneasiness, because they consider these as a part of the universal depravity of human nature, which is common to us with the best and most eminent Christians;—with the Apostles themselves:* and no one can really feel ashamed or alarmed at being just such a sinner as the holy Apostle Paul.

Some perhaps are disposed to balance their faults with their (supposed) virtues;

* See *Lessons on Morals*, Less. 7, § 5.

or to compare themselves with such of their neighbours as are worse than themselves; and he must be bad indeed who cannot find some one whom he can at least fancy to be worse. And any deficiency in themselves they hope will be made up by the mercy of God. Thousands are deluded to their ruin by the Father of lies, through a rash trust in God's mercy. Our first Parents were thus deceived by that Tempter, who persuaded them that God was too merciful to act as He had declared. He had told them that if they transgressed his commands they should die. 'Ye shall not surely die,' said the Tempter: and so he says still to multitudes who as readily believe him. God is indeed most merciful; but his mercy is such as He has Himself described it; and if we expect any thing different, we are deceived. 'He so loved the world that He gave his only-begotten Son, that all that believe in Him should not perish, but should have everlasting life.' But to '*believe* in the Son of God' implies, in the language of Scripture, not merely an assent of the understanding to the fact of his coming into the world, but also to *love* Him who first

loved us. And 'he that hath my commandments, he it is [as our Lord Himself declared] that loveth me' (John xiv. 21); 'and my Father will love him; and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.' Most merciful is God in offering us forgiveness of sins, and redemption through Christ, and the means of grace here, and the hope of glory hereafter; to all which we could put in no claim but from his free promises. But his mercies must be sought in the way He has appointed, or they will not be found. He who teaches us that He is a 'rewarder of them that diligently seek Him,' leaves us to understand that He will not reward those who will not seek Him. They who make no earnest application for his favour, shut out themselves from his favour. He will not 'draw nigh unto them' who will not draw nigh unto Him. If we would obtain the blessing described in our Saviour's words 'lead us not into temptation,' we must obey his warning 'watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.' And those who set their hearts on the things of this world,—who think more, and care more,

about this present life, than the enjoyment of the Saviour's presence in immortal bliss hereafter,—and who in reality can hardly be said even to have any *wish* for Heaven, except as the *next best* thing to this life when they can stay here no longer—such men shut the door of Heaven against themselves, and turn away God's mercy from them, by slighting and setting it at nought.

You cannot indeed trust too fully in the divine mercy; but you must not trust to its granting what is never *promised*—salvation to the irreligious and worldly-minded. And though you should trust that your Heavenly Father will give them that ask Him what He sees to be good things, for them, you must not trust that prayers for present deliverances, and temporal blessings will always be answered.

We are indeed distinctly authorized and commanded to pray for the goods of this life; since our Saviour has taught us, in his own Prayer, to petition for our daily food. But He has also taught us the *reservation* under which any such prayer should be offered, by saying, 'If it be possible, let this cup pass from me; nevertheless not my will, but

thine be done.' With this reservation kept steadily in mind, our prayers for the goods of this life are, as it were, converted into prayers for *resignation* to the divine Will, and in that respect, at least, we may be sure of their acceptance. For, christian resignation is not a mere earthly good, which might or might not be really a blessing to us, but a sanctifying grace of the Holy Spirit absolutely needful for our christian perfection. *Such* 'good things' God has absolutely promised to give to them that ask Him ; and therefore our prayers for *that* will certainly be answered,—not indeed by a miraculous change of feeling, but by giving us power to fulfil our own earnest intention of resigning ourselves obediently to his Will.

And indeed, we have special need of prayer for the divine assistance in seeking this particular christian grace ; for, very difficult in some cases, the duty of resignation certainly is ; especially when we see those most valued by us, and whose lives appear to us the most important to the good of their fellow-men, prematurely cut off, or weighed down with the heaviest afflictions. And in that duty there is this additional difficulty, that

we cannot have so much assurance as in some other duties, of our having *fulfilled* it; because it consists almost entirely in inward *feelings* alone, without any external act. In many cases, and in this among others, we are liable to deceive ourselves (strange as it may seem) as to our own feelings. We are apt to say—(and this without any designed falsehood) that we are glad or sorry, —or that we feel love, or pity, or contempt, &c., when we do not really feel any such thing, but mistake for the *real existence* of the *feeling*, a conviction of the *understanding* that the case is one in which such a feeling is suitable. And so it is with resignation to God's Will. We know and sincerely acknowledge that it is *right* to feel this. But we must not thence conclude at once that we do feel it as we ought. In *all* duties indeed, a right state of the mind is essential; for 'though I give all my goods to feed the poor, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.' (1 Cor. xiii.) But still, to relieve the distressed is a *part* of Charity; and we can know whether we do perform that part. Forgiveness of injuries, again, is a duty which requires the allaying

of inward bitter feelings; but the returning of good for evil is an outward act; and we know whether we do, or do not, practise that. But in the case of *resignation*, it is otherwise. We cannot so well show the right feeling by outward acts. We can indeed abstain from open murmuring, and reproaching of Providence; and we can say 'God's Will be done!' But we know that, after all, God's Will *must* be done, whether we consent or not. And therefore we cannot be sure that we really are fully resigned to it.

We have only to pray fervently for true resignation, and to meditate on what Scripture teaches us with respect to afflictions. It does *not* explain to us indeed, why any sufferings should be necessary; but it teaches us that they *are* necessary, from the example of our Saviour. For some unknown cause, *some* evil is unavoidable. Why any evil at all should have existed in the Universe, is a mystery which some have rashly attempted in vain to clear up; and one which we may be assured never will be explained, in this life. This is a *speculative* question; and on such

questions Scripture does not, for the most part, gratify our curiosity. But how to *escape* from the greatest evils, is a *practical* question; and in that Scripture does give us instruction. And with that instruction we ought to be thankfully content.

Equally to blame are both those who profess to explain, where God has not given us revelation, the reasons of his dealings with Man, and those again who insist on it that in such and such a case He *had* no reason at all, but acted as He did 'to declare his sovereignty,' and 'for his own glory;' as if He could literally desire glory! When the Most High has merely revealed to us his Will, we have no right to pronounce that He *had* no reasons for it except his will,* because He has not made them known to us. Even an earthly king,

* 'Many,' says Calvin (*Inst.* lib. 3, ch. 23, § 7), 'as if wishing to remove odium from God, while they admit *election*, yet deny *reprobation*; but in this they speak ignorantly and childishly; since election itself could not be maintained except as contrasted with reprobation. God is said to set apart those whom He adopts, as children for salvation. Those therefore whom He passes by, He condemns; and that *for no cause whatever except that He chooses* to exclude them from the inheritance which He predestinates for his children.' And again, shortly after,

who is not responsible to any of his subjects for the reasons of his commands, may think fit sometimes to issue commands without explaining his reasons: and it would be very rash for any one to conclude that he had *no* reason at all, but acted from mere caprice.

So also, a dutiful child will often have to say, 'I do so and so because my parents have commanded me; that is reason enough for me.' But though this is—to the child—a very good reason for *obeying* the command, it would be a very bad reason with the *parents* for *giving* that command. And he would show his filial veneration and trust, not, by taking for granted that his parents *had* no reason for their commands, but, on the contrary, by taking for granted that there *was* a good reason both for acting as they did, and for not giving him any explanation.

It is therefore no pious humility, but, on

he says, 'Whence comes it that so many nations, with their infant children, should be sentenced irremediably to eternal death, by the fall of Adam, except that *such was God's will*? . . . The Decree is I confess a horrible one,' &c.

the contrary, great presumption, for Man to pronounce—where Scripture does not tell us—either what were the reasons of God's dealings with us, or that He had none at all. One who pretends to be so much wiser, or better informed, than the Apostles and Prophets, as to tell us what they knew not, or at least were not commissioned to make known, must greatly over-rate the faculties of Man.

But that our Heavenly Father's sending us afflictions does not proceed from ill-will towards us, or from indifference to our welfare, or from caprice, this any one may learn from the christian Scriptures. For there we read that his 'beloved Son, in whom He was well-pleased,' was Himself 'made perfect through sufferings.' And though the reason of this is hidden from us, the fact is plainly before us. If mankind could have been redeemed, and all God's gracious purposes equally well accomplished, without the sufferings of the Innocent and *Well-beloved*, we may be sure this would have been done. But as it is, 'we have not an High-Priest who cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities,

but was in all points tempted [tried] like as we are, yet without sin. Let us therefore come boldly to the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need; well assured that in the end 'all things shall work together for good to them that love God.'

LECTURE IV.

Prayer for one another.

IT is plain that no one can possibly pray, really and from his heart, unless he has some expectation that his prayer may be heard. The exhortation therefore of the Apostle James [Ch. v. 16] to 'pray for one another,' — and Paul's desiring the Ephesians [Ch. vi. 18] to pray for himself, and 'for all Saints' [*i.e.* all Christians], and again, his frequent mention of his own prayers for his converts, must imply that prayers offered up by one person in behalf of another, may prove effectual, and may be granted by our Heavenly Father. And yet there is something strange, and at first sight presenting a difficulty, in the very notion of prayers for another person being of any avail; especially such prayers as are offered up for the most important benefits to him, — for his spiritual improvement, and for his eternal welfare. That one man's success or failure in anything, but

most especially his everlasting salvation, should be permitted to depend in any degree on the supplications of any of his fellow-creatures in his behalf, is something so strange and startling as to be, at the first glance, hardly credible. Any one may indeed (it may be said) become *himself* the more fit to receive some benefit from Heaven, from the circumstance of his own earnest prayer for it, and through the very act of that prayer: but how can this follow from the prayers of another? How can another's piety make any one the more deserving of divine favour, or the better qualified for obtaining it?

There is indeed a mystery in this, which is quite beyond our explanation. It is something awful and overpowering. But there is not any such difficulty in the case as to justify any doubt as to the truth of the doctrine itself that one person's prayers in behalf of another may be heard. For, whatever difficulty does exist in the case, extends to our *actions* as much as to our prayers. The influence which one person's *conduct* is allowed to have on the welfare of another, can no more be ex-

plained than the influence of his prayers. And yet, that the welfare of one person does, in many instances, depend very much on the conduct of others, is a fact which it is impossible to doubt. We need not go to Revelation to learn this. If we know nothing of Christianity, and had never heard of a future state, we could not but see that a man's welfare, in this life, is often very greatly affected by the conduct of others. He will often be rich or poor,—well or ill brought up—according to the conduct of his parents. And the whole course of his life afterwards will depend very much on the character of the government under which he is placed, and of the neighbours among whom he lives.

And the same seems to be the case also, in no small degree, in what relates to his christian character, and his christian hopes beyond the grave. It is impossible to deny that a person may be guided into the paths of virtue and wisdom, or of vice and folly, according to the good or bad *instruction*,—the right or wrong advice,—that he receives from others; and that he may be kept steady in the right way, or may be

seduced out of it, by the good or bad *examples* of those around him. Nay, the exertions and the example of even one man, if he be one very high in station or in ability, may have an influence on the character and on the welfare of a whole nation.

There is no reason then, from the nature of the case, why the prayers, as well as the acts, of one person, may not have something to do with the welfare of another; since both cases alike are beyond our powers of explanation. We can only say that such evidently is the scheme of God's Providence, that men are made a powerful instrument of his dispensations towards their fellow-men.

And that this may take place by Prayer as well as in other ways, is what we are bound to believe on the authority of Scripture; since the Apostles, James and Paul, for instance, would not have exhorted Christians to pray for one another, and have, themselves, practised such prayer, if those Apostles had not been convinced that such prayers might be heard.

As for the notion that *deceased* Christians

of eminent holiness can hear our addresses to them, and that it is allowable and profitable to invoke these Saints, as they are called, and to ask them to pray for us, this is something quite different; and it is utterly at variance both with Scripture and with Reason. For, to imagine a departed Christian to be able to hear, and to understand, and repeat, thousands of addresses made to him every day—many of them at the very same moment—by different persons in all parts of the world—this is to exalt him into a god. And if it had pleased the Most High to confer such a wonderful power on any of his creatures, and to encourage our invoking of these Saints, we may be sure that we should have found this very clearly and fully revealed in Scripture; in which we find nothing of the kind, but on the contrary everything to show that no such notion was thought of, in the earliest Ages of the Church.

If you had lived in the times of Peter or Paul, and had personal intercourse with them, it would have been very reasonable and allowable to ask them to pray for you. And you might reasonably ask the same of

any pious friend, now. So also you might ask him for *advice*, or for information on some subject. But if when he was dead, or was many miles distant, you were to pretend to consult him, and to talk to him as if he were alive and present, every one would think you insane. And it would be no less absurd (in the absence of any plain revelation to that effect) to ask him to *pray* for you, and to fancy that he could hear your request.

But the *living* you *may* thus apply to for their prayers. And what an awful and sublime thought it is that such prayers may be heard; that God may accept the supplications of the humblest individual of us; who may, in this way, be made an instrument of good, to his children and other relatives—to his friends and neighbours—to his country—to the Universal Church of Christ—and to the whole Race of Mankind!

You should consider then whether you are in the habit of recommending to the merciful care of your Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier, all those most dear to you, and about whom you are most interested.

Among the rest you should remember most especially the Ministers of the Gospel under whom you are placed, and all others in the Church of Christ. You should thus remember also all whom you are especially bound to love and wish well to; including your enemies: since our great Master has told us to 'love our enemies, and to pray for them that despitefully use us and persecute us.' Yet there are some who reckon themselves followers of Him who gave this precept, and who expect salvation through Him, who do not even pray for their *friends*. Is it from indifference about those for whom He lived, and died? Is it from want of kindness towards those whom He calls—even the least of them—his brethren, and for whom whatever is done He will reckon as done unto Himself? Or is it from want of faith in his promise that those who in his Name call earnestly on God, and faint not, shall be heard? Is it from aversion to all thoughts about Him who is the Disposer of all events, and the Giver to all men of every good thing they enjoy? Or is it that you deem yourself not good enough to beseech God in behalf of

others, yet worthy to be heard when you pray for yourself; or fit to obtain benefits without praying for them at all?

If these, or any other reasons, have hitherto kept you back from offering up daily your earnest supplications for your friends, and for all your fellow-creatures, let your first thought be, to implore with shame and with hearty repentance, the divine forgiveness for such indifference and sinful neglect, either towards God, or towards your fellow-men. For, one or the other it must be; if not both. And let the next thought be a sincere gratitude for God's condescending goodness in promising to hear the petitions of his weak and unworthy creatures, in behalf of themselves and of one another. And let the third thought be, a devout and sincere supplication to Him that He would deign—not for the sake of your own righteousness, but for the merit of *his* sacrifice who died for mankind—to bless both yourself, and those that especially belong to you, and all your christian brethren, and all your fellow-men.

You cannot indeed pray for others, or in any way seek to further their salvation, with

the same confidence of success, as when seeking divine grace for your own soul; because some good-will on *their* part—some exertions of theirs,—are necessary towards bringing them this good. We must leave with Providence the event, both of our prayers and our other endeavours to benefit our neighbour. But though the event depends not on *us*, the efforts we use to promote it do depend on us; and these therefore we are bound to use, to the utmost of our ability.

You should pray then for your relatives and friends, and for all who have ever shown you kindness; that God would bestow on them in this world whatever things He sees to be best for them, and that you may meet them—never more to part—in a better world hereafter. You should pray also for any who may ever in any way have wronged you; beseeching God to forgive them, and to grant you grace to forgive them from your heart even as you hope for pardon for yourself.

But in praying for those whom you may believe to have wronged you, and for those whom you consider to be in error, you must

guard against the arrogance of at once taking for granted that you yourself are infallibly in the right, and that all the faults, or all the mistakes, must be on the other side. You should accompany such prayers (which should of course be always *private*) with a special and searching self-examination; praying for God's enlightening grace, and begging of Him that *whichever* party is in the wrong, may be brought to see, and to amend, the fault, or the error.

And remember too, that when in fact you are altogether in the right, there can be no *humility* in your confessing that your *neighbour* is in fault. It may seem strange that any such admonition as this should *ever* be at all needed by any one. But needed it certainly is. If I were to set forth as national sins some measures of our Rulers, or some parts of the conduct of some of our countrymen, and to call on those who had *had no part* in anything of the kind, and who had always protested against those measures and that conduct, to *humble* themselves for these sins, and to confess them to be deserving of divine judgments,—If I were to do this, I have no doubt that there

would be found persons who would highly approve and applaud such a proposed humiliation, and would think that praying for the correction of *another's* faults is something humbly pious. There would be found persons, I say, who would fail to perceive that however right we may in fact be, there can be at least no humility in confessing that our Rulers, or that our neighbours, are in the wrong. Such indeed is rather the self-exaltation of the Pharisee in the Parable, who thanked God that he was 'not as this Publican.'

Some persons may perhaps think that such cautions as the above are quite needless, and that no one is likely to commit such faults as have been described. But unhappily it is not so.

Suppose some person, who differed from you in opinion on some points, should stand up in a congregation, and offer up for you (by name or by a plain innuendo) what he called a prayer, but which sounded more like a denunciation of divine wrath; praying that your eyes might be opened, and that you might be snatched as a brand from the burning, by being brought to a better mind,—

that is, by being brought to adopt his opinions; *—you would regard this as an ill-disguised attack on your character,—as an insult put into the form of a prayer. Now this is what has more than once been done, by persons making great professions of piety, and who have deceived others as well as themselves, into the belief that that was christian charity and modest humility which was in truth very much the opposite. So successfully does Satan sometimes ‘transform himself into an Angel of light!’

But to return: You should offer up, as Paul enjoins us, (1 Tim. ii.) ‘Supplications for Kings and for all who are in authority, that we may lead a peaceable life, in all godliness and honesty.’ They are,—for *our* benefit,—placed by Providence in a very trying and difficult situation. And especially you should pray for the Church of

* Cases have occurred of *children* of ten years old having been set up to hold forth in this style before a Congregation; uttering what were called prayers, but which sounded more like curses; and of their being represented as speaking by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit! And that a Clergyman has publicly in the congregation prayed, by name, for the ‘conversion’ of our Queen, is as true, as it is strange and shocking.

Christ; that is, (as our Prayer-book expresses it) for ‘all who profess and call themselves Christians,’ in all parts of the world; that they may ‘hold the unity of the true Faith, in the bond of peace’ and brotherly love,—as being Members of the same Body of which Christ is the Head,—and in that ‘righteousness of life’ without which to ‘name the Name of Christ’ will but increase the condemnation of those who do not ‘depart from iniquity.’ But more especially should you ask these blessings for those of your fellow-Christians who are themselves of our own Church, and for those among whom you live. And for the sake of these, you ought especially to beg the divine blessing on the labours of the Clergy, generally; and of those Ministers particularly who are appointed to ‘watch for your souls as they that must give an account;’ even as Paul enjoins the Ephesians [chap. vi. 18] to ‘pray with all perseverance and supplication, for all Saints,’ (that is, all Christians*) and ‘for him, that utterance may be given him that he may open his

* See Discourse on *Christian Saints*.

mouth boldly, to make known the mystery of the Gospel.' Entreat God therefore to animate and direct the labours of those under whose ministry you live, that they may be 'pure from the blood of all men' by 'not shunning to set before them all the counsel of God;' and that He would be pleased to let their labours not be in vain, but that the People may, through his blessing, 'hear with meekness his Word, and receive it with pure affection, and bring forth the fruits of the Spirit.'

And you should not omit in your prayers, the Heathen nations who have not as yet received the tidings of Salvation through Christ; praying that it may please God to enlighten them with his Gospel, that all may be 'one Fold under One Shepherd.' You should also entreat Him in behalf of those who reject his Gospel, and of those who have fallen into hurtful errors, or who 'hold the truth in unrighteousness' of life; and those who neglect to pray for themselves; imploring Him to awaken such persons if possible to a sense of their danger: and also to give *you* grace not to pride yourself on a comparison with those who

may be worse than yourself, but to use any opportunity that may offer, to bring about their reform or improvement.

For in this, and in every other branch of Prayer, you should always keep in mind, and study to impress it on your heart, that your *actions* must keep pace with your prayers;—in short, that you must hear them *yourself*, if you expect that God will hear them; and that while acknowledging that nothing you attempt can prosper without the divine blessing on your endeavours, you are required to use your utmost endeavours, if you would obtain that blessing. You must apply as earnestly to God as if *nothing* depended on yourself; and yet you must exert yourself as strenuously as if *everything* depended on yourself. As there is nothing we are required to do, in which prayer for divine aid is not needful, so there is scarcely any thing we are taught to pray for in which our own exertions are not called for, in order that we may obtain our desires. There is not, for instance, in our Lord's own prayer, any petition of which the fulfilment does not in some measure depend on ourselves. He does not

teach us to pray for fruitful seasons, or for fortunate accidents, or in short, for any object that is wholly independent of all exertion on our part. The blessings which we are instructed to ask of God, are such as we are also instructed in Scripture to strive for, ourselves; in order to teach us at once our dependence on divine favour for the success of all our efforts, and also the necessity of using those efforts if we would obtain that favour. When we pray that 'God's Name may be hallowed,' we must be sensible that we ourselves may hallow, or may profane it; and may lead others by our example to do the same. We pray that his 'Will may be done;' and we know that it is incumbent on *us* to do it. We pray for our 'daily bread;' which we know that Man is sentenced to 'eat in the sweat of his brow.' We ask 'forgiveness of our sins;' the condition of obtaining which, we are expressly taught, is, that we should not only repent, and strive to amend, but also 'forgive those who trespass against us.' We are bound to keep clear, with the utmost caution, of the 'temptation' which we beg not to be led

into; and to resist with firmness the 'Evil One' from whom we pray to be 'delivered.' And those very Disciples who had been taught to pray that God's 'Kingdom might come;' were shortly after sent forth with a commission to 'go and teach all nations,' and thus to spread that kingdom.

The 'hallowing of God's Name,' and the 'coming of his kingdom,' and that his 'Will may be done on Earth as in Heaven,' are petitions which our Lord teaches us to offer up before we pray for our daily bread. And the coming of his kingdom,—that kingdom which He declared to be 'not of this World'—must be understood to mean the establishment of his dominion over the hearts of men; so that they may not merely acknowledge Him with their lips, but obey Him in their lives;—not merely 'callin Him Lord, Lord,' but 'doing the things that He says,' and obeying the 'Will of his heavenly Father;' that they may enter the glorified and triumphant kingdom of Heaven in the next world.

How unlike their Master, then, and how regardless of his precepts, and how unfit to obtain his favour, must any Christians be

who are indifferent about the salvation of their neighbour, or who triumph over his failings, and exult in the thought of another's being worse than themselves; or who do not earnestly pray—and follow up their prayers by their exertions—that all who are within their reach may be brought to Christ, and led into the way of salvation. Yet some, I fear, may be found who are accustomed to say,—or at least, inwardly to think—‘What is it to me what sort of life another person chuses to lead? Whether his faith be true, or erroneous, or none at all—whether he is a saint or a sinner—is his concern, not mine.’ May not such a one be asked at the last Great Day, by his divine Judge, ‘What was it to ME whether Mankind were saved or lost? Why did I suffer death on the Cross, for thee, as well as for others, whose salvation was no concern of mine, except that I loved, ‘while yet sinners,’ those whom I commanded, for my sake to ‘love one another?’’

But it is the Clergyman's business (some may say) to pray for all, and to teach men the right Faith, and to exhort them to right practice. It would be impertinent

in me to intrude with the office of a Minister. True, if you assume any office or authority that does not belong to you. Nor again, shall you—or should any one,—interfere in a harsh or censorious manner with any one's concerns; or advise with arrogance, or rebuke with bitterness. If you should act so, or if you should seek to abridge any one's liberty of conscience, and force or entrap him into what you regard as a right Faith, you would not be doing good but harm. But authorized and therefore bound, you are, to do as much *good* to your neighbour as you are able. Is this your practice? You probably endeavour to find means (without arrogant or impertinent interference) to induce those you live with to respect and honour *you*, and to do you service, and to behave well towards you. Do you make it as much your endeavour, by cautious and well-timed advice,—by gentle reasoning, and kind persuasion,—and by your own example, to induce them to serve and honour your Heavenly Father, and to behave rightly in *his* sight?

If not a christian *Minister*, you are at

least a professed Christian;—and as such, bound to regard all other Christians as your brethren, and to love them for Christ's sake, and to seek their good, and to consider their eternal salvation, and all that tends to it, as incomparably their greatest good; and to promote this, both by your prayers, and by using all other fair means towards those within reach of your influence.

If the Clergy are, as it were, the elder brethren in Christ's family, the rest are still to regard themselves as brethren of the same family, and 'members one of another.' If they are the Officers, you are at least the Soldiers, of the great army of 'Christ's Church Militant here on Earth.' If theirs is the more widely-extended influence, yours may reach to many private cases, where theirs will not. And moreover, if *they* should neglect their office, yours will still be required at your hands. And if again they perform theirs, to the best of their power, you are able, and are therefore bound, to second and forward, in a great degree, their endeavours, by merely watching as carefully for opportunities, and

using them as diligently, for bringing men to serve and please God, as almost every one does, to induce them to serve and please himself.

There is hardly any one but knows—or may know,—*something* respecting his religion, concerning which some other may be ignorant, or mistaken. Do you then seek for an occasion to remove his ignorance or his error, in meekness and modesty?

There is hardly any one, again, whose *example* may not have *some* weight with some one. There is no one who may not on some particular occasion, check, in some degree, profaneness, or other corrupt language, intemperance, dishonesty, and other sins; or who may not encourage and direct at least some young persons in the love and fear of God. And certainly there is no one, however humble or obscure, who may not *pray* heartily in secret for his neighbour, or whose prayers may not be accepted by his ‘Father who seeth in secret.’

What your christian Minister may judge of you, or you of him, or any of you of each other, is a matter of comparatively

small consequence;—since ‘He that judgeth is the Lord;’ and before his judgment-seat both must stand; the Minister to give an account of what he has said, or left unsaid; and you, of what you have heard, or might have heard, and of *how* you have heard. For, ‘take heed,’ says our Lord, ‘how ye hear; every one that hath, to him shall be given; and from him that hath not, even that which he hath shall be taken away.’

Each then, and all of us, will have to give an account (among other points of duty) of all that we have done or left undone, — by example, by instruction and admonition, and by Prayer, towards promoting the salvation of our neighbours. At the last Day it will be the great concern of each of us what account he himself shall have to render of all that has happened during this his state of trial. And on that Day, to have been the means under Providence of leading even one soul into the way of salvation, will be a joy and a triumph far beyond all that this world can bestow.

We are all bound then to petition earnestly for grace to be duly sensible of the

importance to ourselves of an earnest and affectionate zeal for the eternal welfare of others;—to feel this, and to act on that feeling more thoroughly than we have hitherto done. And we should pray that it may please God to prosper our endeavours towards promoting the ‘coming of his Kingdom’ and the ‘doing of his Will on Earth;’ and that He would forgive us, among our other trespasses, any coldness and remissness we may hitherto have been guilty of, in neglecting opportunities of bringing any of our fellow-creatures to the knowledge and love of God, and in not with sufficient earnestness praying and striving for their eternal happiness; beseeching Him who is ‘always more ready to hear than we to pray, and is wont ‘to give more than either we desire or deserve, to pour down upon us the abundance of his mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ his Son our Lord.’

LECTURE V.

Private Prayer.

VERY interesting, and, if rightly considered, very instructive also, is the account we find, in the early part of John's Gospel, of our Lord's first interview with Nathanael. We read that Jesus had seen him, though not present in bodily person, and seen him so as to know him to be 'a true Israelite in whom was no guile.' He must therefore have read the thoughts of his heart, when Nathanael supposed himself to be alone, and was engaged,—as I think we cannot doubt,—in devout meditation, and private prayer. For thus only could he have been so *known*.

Nathanael, on this proof being given of the superhuman powers of Jesus, at once acknowledged Him as the expected 'King of Israel, and the Son of God.'

And as he was one of the earliest Disciples, so there can be little doubt that he was afterwards enrolled in the number of

the Apostles. For, it is all but a certainty that he is the same person who is mentioned by the other three Evangelists under the name of Bartholomew.

To make this point the more clear, you should observe that the Hebrew names beginning with '*Bar*'—that is, son,—are what are called *Patronymics*,—*family-names*; like many names among us that end in '*son*;' such as Johnson, Robertson, and many others. Thus we read in Mark's Gospel, of 'blind Bartimeus, the son of Timeus.' So also the Apostle Simon (who afterwards received the surname of Peter) had originally the surname of Barjona; *i.e.* son of Jonah. Now of course, any one who bore such a name would be almost certain to have had—like that Simon—*another* name also,—answering to our christian name,—to distinguish him from others of the same family. And it is more than probable that the other name of Bartholomew was Nathanael. For, the name of Bartholomew, as an Apostle, is found in three of the Gospels, and never occurs at all in that of John. Nathanael again, one of the earliest Disciples, and evidently a very eminent one,

is never mentioned *by that name*, in the other three Gospels. If we suppose them to have spoken of him under the other name, this explains all. And moreover you may observe that they always mention Bartholomew along with *Philip*, as if there had been some particular intimacy between those two. And in John's Gospel we find that it was Philip that brought Nathanael to Jesus.

When he was thus introduced, and was addressed by Jesus as 'an Israelite without guile,' Nathanael asks, in surprise, 'Whence knowest thou me?' and receives the answer, 'Before that Philip called thee, when thou wast under the Figtree, I saw thee.' Whereupon Nathanael at once exclaims 'Rabbi, thou art the Son of God! Thou art the King of Israel!'

Now that Jesus should have known of his being in a particular spot at a certain time, when (as it is plain we must suppose) He was far away, and could not have seen him in a natural way,—was, no doubt, of itself, an indication of his possessing more than human powers. But there is more in the transaction than this;—more than his merely being acquainted, in a supernatural

manner, with the place where Nathanael was at a particular moment. This is plain from what passed between them. For, Jesus does not simply mention his having seen him under the figtree, but gives this as a reason for his *knowing* him, as ‘an Israelite without guile.’ And Nathanael’s immediate and eager acknowledgment of Him, not only as a person of super-human powers, but as the Son of God, and the King of Israel, shows his own consciousness that Jesus did *know* him;—had not only seen him in the place where he was, but had perceived in him something by which his character might be known;—had read, in short, the thoughts of his heart, and had discovered by what was passing within him that he was a guileless Israelite.

How then may we suppose Nathanael to have been occupied under the figtree, so that Jesus, by seeing him there, could judge of his heart? Retired under the shade, and withdrawn from the active employments of the world, he was doubtless occupied—as I have already said—in communing with his own heart, and with his God. What were his meditations and prayers, is not recorded. We are only left to collect the nature of

them from the judgment pronounced by Jesus;—that judgment which caused Nathanael when he heard it, to decide at once that this must be the Son of the all-seeing God.

It is highly probable that he was meditating concerning the expected ‘King of Israel;’—the Christ [or Messiah] of whom Moses and the Prophets had written, and who was expected (as is well known) to appear *about that time*. It is likely that he was praying for the coming of the kingdom of God, and was endeavouring to be in a fit state to welcome it;—to be a well-prepared subject of the kingdom.

It is likely that he was lifting up his heart in gratitude for all the benefits,—all the temporal deliverances and blessings,—which he and his nation had received from the Lord. And he was probably filled with devout longings after a better state beyond the grave; of which the Jews at that period had some belief; though some of them denied the doctrine, and none had the full brightness of the revelation made by Jesus Christ, who ‘brought life and immortality to light, through the Gospel.’

But of this above all, we may be sure, from the strong censures so often passed by Jesus on the hypocrisy, and the spiritual pride and self-confidence of the Pharisees, that Nathanael, the 'Israelite without guile,' had been humbling himself before God with a sincere and lowly confession of his imperfections and infirmities, and acknowledgment of his own entire dependence on God alone for favour which he could not earn by merits of his own. He was not, certainly, at all like those Pharisees whom our Lord speaks of as making their private prayers standing in the streets, and in market-places, that they might obtain 'praise of men;' but he must have been praying in secret to his 'Father who seeth in secret.'

It is very plain, and is important to be kept in mind, that our Lord's censure of the ostentatious display of the Pharisees, relates to the private prayers (or what *ought* to be private) of *individuals*; not, to the public worship of the Synagogues, in which He Himself regularly joined. For the 'corners of the streets' in which He speaks of them as 'for a pretence making

long prayers,' were not the appointed places for public joint prayer, (what is called by our Reformers 'Common-prayer') but the Synagogues, in which Congregations assembled, and which answer to what we call Churches or Chapels. And such assemblies for Common-prayer, our Lord evidently designed his followers to keep up; graciously promising to those who should be 'gathered together in his Name,' that He would 'be there in the midst of them;' and that those who should 'agree together touching something they should ask in his Name' (supposing, of course, that it should be what God saw to be really good for them) should have their petition granted. And you may plainly see from the history of the Acts of the Apostles, that Christian worshippers did thus assemble.

But it is plain that our Lord is censuring the vain-glorious publicity of the devotions of *individuals*; and that it is to individual private prayers that his precept applies, 'thou, when thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut the door, pray to thy Father which is in secret.'

No Christian then should allow himself to omit either of the duties, of public congregational worship, and of private devotion. All Christians as being ‘members one of another’—members of that Body which Christ established,—his Church—are required to keep up the remembrance of that ‘their fellowship in Christ Jesus’—the ‘Communion of Saints,’ (as it is called in the Apostles’ Creed) to which they belong—by meeting together, and joining in thanksgiving and prayer, to their common Father, Redeemer, and Sanctifier. And again, such individual Christian, having himself, by himself, an interest in all that God has done for him, and knowing that he is hereafter to answer for himself, personally, before Christ’s Judgment-seat at the last Day, and having his own particular sins to confess,—his own particular trials, and duties, and also his own particular blessings to give thanks for—hence, I say, each single member of Christ’s Church is bound to worship God habitually, by himself, as a single individual. The same who has promised that when we are ‘gathered together in his Name, He will be in

the midst of us,' has also promised 'if any man love me, he will keep my saying, and my Father will love him, and We will come unto him, and make our abode with him.'

When Nathanael was *alone*—that is, when no human Being was with him—Jesus saw him, and read his heart, and knew the sincere devotion that was in it. Does He not still do this? Is He not with you when you are what is called alone? Does He not see you when no mortal eye is on you, and know every thought of your heart, whether you are in the midst of Society, or in the most perfect retirement?

And *what* does He see? Look back in the record of your own conscience, and ask yourself what the Lord has seen in your most secret thoughts and actions, and how far He is likely to approve them.

Do you constantly pray to Him in private? Do you 'worship Him in spirit and in truth,' from your heart and 'without guile;' with sincere and earnest devotion? or are you satisfied with merely *saying* your prayers, without really praying;—repeating with your lips a form of words,

as if the mere sound could act as a kind of charm, while your heart is far away?

All these are very important questions; as every one will think, one day, whatever he may think, now.

Our Lord sees *us* always; as most persons are ready to acknowledge in words, though they are apt not sufficiently to dwell on the thought. But the time will come when *we* shall see *Him*; and that, whether we will or no. At the great Day of Judgment, we shall be—not indeed more in the presence of our Lord than we are at this moment,—but more *conscious* of being in his presence. ‘Every eye shall see Him.’ Each individual of that countless multitude will then perceive that all-seeing Eye directed as full upon himself as if he stood alone; though thousands of thousands of his fellow-creatures will be at the same moment in the same condition. It is better therefore not to shut our eyes, now, against that which we shall not, then, be able to shut them against;—to remember, now, that He who, we ‘believe, shall come to be our Judge,’ sees us, and is present in spirit to every

thought of our heart,—and to endeavour that ‘the words of our mouth, and the meditations of our heart may be acceptable in his sight,’ now, that we may be the better fitted for enduring his presence hereafter.

One may sometimes however meet with persons who are disposed to excuse themselves from the duty of private devotion, on the plea that they have not enough *learning*. They think—or profess to think—that they are too ignorant and rude of speech to frame for themselves any form of petition fit to be addressed to the Almighty. And if they cannot read, or if they possess no books containing suitable forms of Prayer, they consider themselves as shut out entirely from offering up any private supplications to God at all.

With some perhaps this may be a feigned excuse, by which they endeavour to conceal from themselves a dislike to the Worship and to the thought of their Maker. But any one who is not wanting in real devotion of heart, and is sincerely desirous of doing what is well-pleasing in God’s sight, may easily perceive, on a little re-

flection, what a mistaken notion that is, which I have been speaking of. There is hardly any one who has no opportunity of learning, for instance, the Lord's prayer; or that has not sufficient ability to understand it when explained to him; or that has never had any means of obtaining that explanation. But I am far from advising any one to confine himself to the use of that form alone, or of any other form composed by any one. There are indeed several prayers extant, by various writers, some of which—particularly several of what are called the Collects in our Prayer-book,—may very suitably be used in our private devotions.*

* Any one however who does use any such forms in his private devotions, should take care that they be such as really are suitable thereto. There are instances, not only among Roman Catholics but even among Protestants, of persons actually reciting the *Apostles' Creed* as a portion of their private devotions; being either so ignorant or so thoughtless, as not to perceive that it was not designed either to be *private*, or as a *prayer* at all, but a *public profession of faith*.

I may add that the error should be avoided which many well-meaning people commit, of teaching very young children to repeat by rote prayers of which they do not understand the meaning. This is likely to create a habit,—which it will be difficult afterwards to shake off,—of

But I would not have any one confine himself to these, in his private prayer. Let each offer up his own petitions as well as he can, in his own words. Private Prayer, to be what it ought to be, must *specify* and particularize much that cannot be expressed in any words but one's own. *Forms* of prayer *must* be *general*; but in private, you should pray for the particular blessings or deliverances you feel yourself to need, on each particular occasion. As Solomon says in his beautiful prayer at the dedication of the Temple, 'every man knoweth the plague of his own heart.' You should pray for support not only under temptation, generally, but under those particular ones which you are exposed to at the moment, by your station, age, and other particular circumstances.

Is there any one too ill-educated and too illiterate to do this? There may indeed be some who know too little of their Religion to understand *what* they ought chiefly

formalism—of fancying themselves to be praying when in fact they are not, though they are uttering the *words* of prayer.

to pray for; namely, for the inward help and guidance of the Holy Spirit; and *how* they must seek to obtain all their petitions; namely, for Jesus Christ's sake, and through the merit of his sacrifice for us. For any such person, it is high time that he should endeavour to gain the knowledge that he wants concerning the Gospel; or he will have a fearful account to render hereafter. For, ignorance is no excuse when a man has it in his power to know better. And this must be the case with most of those born and brought up in a christian country. But let even such a person as I have supposed—if he does but believe in a God—beg of that God to help his endeavours to know Him better,—to grant him a goodwill to seek, and a power to find, that knowledge of the Gospel which he stands in need of.

But some who are not without some knowledge of what the christian Religion is, have a distrust of their own powers of language, and think themselves too unlearned to frame any form of expression fit to be addressed to their Maker. Can any one then suppose that God can care for elo-

quent language? Can He who reads the inmost thoughts of our hearts, care at all for the elegance of the words in which our thoughts are expressed? Do but consider how feeble and imperfect all language is, in expressing fully, even to each other, what is passing within us. How much more must even the best language fall short of doing justice to the glory of the Most High! The wisest, and the simplest—the most learned and the most ignorant—the most eloquent, and the most rude of speech—widely as they differ among *men*,—must all come so infinitely short of the divine perfections, that the difference between them is as nothing. It is as if you were to compare together a greater and smaller drop of water, by the side of the vast ocean; or the greater and the less of two candles, in the light of the sun. Much less still, are the greatest and the least of us mortals, in the presence of the Most High. He is adored by Angels and Archangels; the lowest of whom may perhaps be, if compared with the greatest of *us*, what Man is to an insect; and yet the noblest of them is at an immeasurable distance from the great

Creator, and unable worthily to express his praises. But God looks to the sincerity and purity of the heart; not to the strength and cultivation of the understanding. Nathanael was commended by Jesus, not for his learning or abilities, but for being 'an Israelite without guile.' And as our Lord Himself observed, on another occasion, 'if ye, evil as ye are, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Heavenly Father give good things to them that ask Him?' What father, indeed, would slight the affectionate entreaties of his child, for anything that was good for him, because the child's words were incorrect, or imperfectly stammered forth? God will therefore, we may be assured, give to those his children who apply to Him with humble and affectionate sincerity, whatever is really for their good, without regarding the correctness of their language. To Him 'all hearts are open, all desires known; and from Him no secrets are hid.'

You will seldom, if ever, meet with any one so ignorant as not to be able,—when he had a favour to ask, which he was ear-

nestly bent on obtaining,—to express plainly and intelligibly enough—and humbly, and strongly too—what it was that he wanted. But then, some may perhaps say, ‘the language which is fit to be addressed to a *man*, may be unworthy of God’s majesty.’ In truth, *all* language is so; though He deigns to listen to it. But so far from its requiring *more* ability and eloquence to address God than Man, the case is just the reverse. If you express yourself so imperfectly in applying to one of your fellow-men, as not to show clearly what you mean, you may from this cause fail of your wish: but God sees your heart; and if *that* is but sincere, there is no fear of *his* mistaking you. A man, again, might perhaps scorn or ridicule one who expressed himself very imperfectly; but He to whom all language is alike imperfect, despises nothing but insincerity or hardness of heart.

‘God, be merciful for Christ’s sake, to me, a sinner! O God help me to resist this present temptation! Grant me aid in deciding rightly what course to take on the present occasion! Support and comfort me under this present affliction! Give me

grace to know and serve Thee better! Guide me by the Holy Spirit in all my thoughts, words, and actions!' Such simple petitions as these, if they come from the inmost heart, will find their way effectually to the throne of Grace: while the most elaborate and eloquent prayers that are uttered with the lips without the heart, are reckoned but as an idle mockery of the All-seeing God.

If therefore you are able to make your wants known to your fellow-men, and to urge your wishes to *them*, be assured you are much *better* able to offer your prayers to the King of kings: except indeed in this respect, that men may be deceived by feigned tales, and persuaded by insincere flattery; while God looks for perfect sincerity, and knows where to find it.

Remember therefore that He who saw Nathanael when in solitude under the fig-tree, sees *you*, now, and always. The Lord Jesus, while in his state of humiliation on Earth, 'knew what was in Man.' And to Him is now 'given all power in Heaven and in Earth;' so that He is also 'able to

save them to the uttermost that come to God by Him.' And if you call on Him in truth and sincerity, you will be welcomed on coming to Him, as kindly as Nathanael was; and will have Him for your friend, in this life, and for ever.

LECTURE VI.

Public Worship.

AS was observed in the preceding Lecture, no Christian should allow himself to omit either of those two branches of duty, —*private* Prayer as an individual, and *joint-prayer* along with his brethren in Christ. For the same who tells us ‘when thou prayest, go into thy closet, and having shut the door, pray to thy Father who is in secret,’ has also promised to those *assembled* in his Name, that He ‘will be in the midst of them;’ and that especial favour will be shown to petitions in which several shall *agree*. And we find accordingly, in the Book of Acts, allusion made to the custom (as well known and fully established) of the Disciples meeting together on the first day of the week*—what is now called the

* This was done even at the time when the Mosaic Law for the observance of the Sabbath,—on the *seventh* day of the week, (Saturday)—was still in force.

Some Christians apply the word *Sabbath* to the Lord’s-

Lord's Day, in honour of our Lord's Resurrection on the first day of the Week,—to 'break bread,' that is, to celebrate the Lord's Supper.

Those therefore are inexcusable who absent themselves from Public Worship—what is called in our Prayer-book 'Common Prayer'*—on the plea that they pray privately at home; or perhaps that they can read a better sermon at home; as if the *Sermon* were the only thing worth attending to, and congregational *prayer* a matter of no consequence! And every right-minded Christian will not only consider the importance of the duty of conforming to our

day. But though this may be allowable, they should abstain from censuring others for not using that language; since the word Sabbath is never, in *Scripture*, applied to the Christian Festival—the Lord's-Day.

The word *Sunday* also may allowably be used, though it is the ancient heathen name, derived from that day's having been dedicated to the worship of the Sun; because there is no danger now, of our falling into that worship.—See *Thoughts on the Sabbath*.

* Some I believe mistake in this place the meaning of the word 'common,' supposing it to mean what is usual and *customary*. But it means *joint-prayer*;—the united Worship of the Congregation. And the word is thus used again in the prayer drawn up by Chrysostom, which speaks of 'our common supplications.'—See DICKINSON'S *Lectures on the Prayer-book*.

divine Master's commands, but also will feel duly grateful for his condescending goodness in promising to be present in spirit among his worshippers. Such a one will accordingly not only not neglect attending on public Worship, but will use care to show reverence, in his manner of attending. And to any such person, it must be a grief to see—as he too often may—several of the people dropping in from time to time, when great part of the Service is over; and some others perhaps showing by their demeanour that they are paying little or no attention to it.

If such persons were permitted, and invited, to attend at the Court of an earthly Sovereign, and had some important petition to address to him, and had received an assurance that he would graciously listen to them, do you think they would either neglect to attend at all, or would fail in attending punctually at the time appointed, or that they would be at all careless and disrespectful in their behaviour when they were present?

It must be through very great, and very sinful thoughtlessness, that any one who

really believes in our Blessed Lord's commands and promises, can allow himself thus to dishonour Him, and to shock the feelings, and interrupt the devotions of his fellow-Christians. It is of course for *our* sake, not for his own, that the Most High claims honour from us: but yet He has declared that 'those who honour Him, He will honour.'

There are others again, and not a few, who are not indeed guilty of showing any such signs of positive disrespect, but who seem to regard the whole of the Public Service as something which they have merely to *listen* to, without taking any part in it themselves. They do not think of uttering any of the Responses which are appointed for the Congregation to say;—not even the *Amen* at the close of each prayer;—but seem to regard that as the office of the Parish-Clerk alone; though the office was appointed for the express purpose of leading the Congregation in their Responses, and thus furnishing a help to those who either cannot read, or are unprovided with a Book.

In the earliest Churches, which always made use of Liturgies, [Forms of Prayer,]

the People used regularly to take a part in the Service; just as it is designed should be done in our Church; the congregation sometimes joining with the Minister, in uttering the same words, and sometimes signifying their assent and adoption of the prayer which he utters, by all responding, *Amen*; that is, ‘so be it:’ thus making it a *joint*, or common prayer.

And a great part of our Church-Service is compiled from some of those very ancient Liturgies; but as there is a manifest absurdity in having public prayers in a language not understood by the People, our Reformers translated the prayers into English, striking off at the same time many objectionable passages which had been introduced in later and less pure Ages of the Church,—such as invocations of Saints—and adding on whatever seemed needful.

Our Liturgy does not profess to be an inspired Work; but it is on the whole so excellent a one that we ought to be thankful for possessing it. And one of the advantages of the use of it, is, that it contains, incidentally, so much of sound scriptural *instruction*, by its frequent and very plain

allusions to almost all the most important Gospel-doctrines.

In those Churches which do not use any Liturgy, and in which accordingly the Minister merely offers up a prayer of his own composition, it may so happen, if he is unsound in doctrine, or negligent, that the People may either learn from him something erroneous, or may seldom or never have their attention called to the main doctrines of the Gospel. This is no imaginary danger. Many of those who are called *Congregationalists*, (who use no Liturgy,) have lapsed, gradually, into the error of Unitarianism;—the denial of our Lord's divine nature. This has taken place very extensively in America. But there have been not a few instances of it elsewhere. Now if, in our Church, any Minister should be thus negligent or unsound, the Prayers which he recites from our Prayer Book would be bearing witness against his errors, and would, in some degree, supply his deficiencies. No member of our Church, who regularly attends her Services, can have the great doctrines of Christianity completely kept out of his sight. Now this is

surely one great advantage (though far from being the only one) of a well-composed Liturgy. And the *same* Liturgy being used in all the several Congregations, in different places of worship belonging to our Church, this 'Uniformity of Public Worship' conveys, (incidentally,) the *same* sound instruction to all; and thus draws closer the bonds of brotherhood among the members of our Church who are in different places. They can thus feel that they are in some sort worshipping *along with* their brethren, even those far away.

But even in any one Congregation there is evidently a much better security for really *joint-worship*—'common supplications'—that *agreement* which our Lord speaks of, 'touching something that shall be asked'—in a fixed Liturgy, than when the Minister delivers a prayer composed by himself, and perhaps composed at the very moment of delivery. When indeed,—as is often the case—the same Minister delivers the same prayer, with only very slight verbal changes, to the same Congregation, day after day, and year after year, this comes nearly to the same thing—as far as regards that

one Congregation, — with an established Liturgy. But to those who have to listen at different times and places to several different Ministers, or to any one who delivers a different prayer each time, it must be generally difficult, and often impossible, that they should really join in each petition so as to make it *their own*, and thus to offer to God a '*common prayer*.' When you are listening to a prayer which is quite *new* to you, you have to attend to the sense so as to take in fully the meaning of each petition; and then you have to consider whether it be such as you can really and heartily join in; and mean time, perhaps another and another sentence will have been uttered; all equally new to you, and all equally requiring the same sort of consideration. If it even should so happen that you can fully approve of everything that is said, and that it is such as you would be *willing* to join in, still, it will often be hardly possible that you can have actually joined in at the moment. You will have been not so much, yourself, praying, as *over-hearing* another person's prayer. For 'two or three to *agree* together touching some-

thing they should ask,' it must be always very desirable, and often quite necessary, that they should know *beforehand* what is to be the petition agreed on.

But it is highly probable, and doubtless far from uncommon, that men should imagine themselves to be engaged in joint prayer, when, in truth, they are,—for the greater part of the time, —not really praying, but attending to a discourse addressed *to* them by another; only, a discourse thrown into the form of a prayer. And it has often been remarked accordingly, that in most of the congregations where the practice I have been speaking of prevails, the prayer—so called—which the Minister utters, becomes, after the first few sentences, much more of a Sermon addressed to the People, than of a supplication to God. Now though a Sermon is not of course a thing to be objected to, in itself, it had better be always delivered *as* a Sermon, and not disguised in the form of a Prayer, nor made a substitute for Congregational Prayer.

It is to be observed, moreover, that the hearer of a Sermon, delivered as such, is not called on, himself to *assent* to every-

thing the Preacher may say. You may listen, and listen fairly and candidly, to a Sermon containing perhaps much sound doctrine and valuable exhortation, yet containing also something, which you cannot fully approve of, and which perhaps may not *deserve* entire approbation; and yet you may have been a profitable hearer, and on the whole, edified, and so may the rest; and the object of coming to religious instruction, will have been fulfilled. But if there be anything in a *Prayer* that is offered up in the name of the Congregation, which you—as one of that Congregation,—and perhaps some others also—cannot agree to, it ceases to be a joint-prayer; and the very object of meeting together as agreeing in a common-supplication, is defeated.

It must not however be forgotten that there is one danger attending the use of a fixed Liturgy; that the words with which you have long been very familiar, may be heard or even recited by you without a full attention to their sense. The sound may reach your ears, or even pass your lips, without being fully impressed on the understanding and the heart; the thoughts

may be apt to wander; so that you may fancy yourself to be praying, when in reality you are not. For, it is a much easier thing, regularly to *attend at* divine Service, than properly to *attend to* divine Service. And this is a danger which you ought fervently to pray against in private, and at the same time carefully to watch against; striving earnestly to keep up your attention in Public Worship. Now a *new* prayer, on the other hand, delivered extemporé by a Minister, excites more attention by its very novelty; and sometimes all the more if it contains some original thoughts, eloquently and strikingly expressed, though perhaps not sound and judicious. But then—as has been above said—it is likely to be attended to rather as an *exhortation* to the People, or an exposition of doctrine, than as a really joint-prayer; so that the hearers will be even more likely than in the other case to fall into the error noticed just above. Each party will be in danger, though from different causes, of deceiving themselves (strange as such a self-deceit may appear) by *fancying* that they are praying, when they are not.

But on the whole, the advantages of a fixed Liturgy are such as greatly to overbalance any of the objections to it. That, and that alone, secures in the best way, the main object of congregational worship ;—of prayer that shall be not only *real* prayer, but *united* prayer ; it tends to keep up the feeling of brotherhood among different Congregations belonging to the same christian Church ; and it affords (if well-composed) a great portion of incidental good instruction in the Church's doctrines, so as to provide a considerable check to negligent or unsound Preachers. And moreover, though the prayers that might be composed by each Minister might be, many of them very good, it is likely that others of them might be in some respects objectionable. And it is likely that most of them, being perhaps hastily composed, and poured forth extemporé, would be inferior to the Prayers drawn up deliberately and carefully (like those of our Liturgy) by a council of men selected for their good sense and piety, and consulting together in that work.*

* It is not generally known that the famous John

Some however of those who prefer the system of having no fixed Liturgy are accustomed to speak in disparagement of *all Forms* of Prayer, framed by one person and adopted by another; and express their preference of *extemporaneous* Prayer, to all forms whatever. But they seem to forget that if every member of a Congregation were to pour forth his own prayer, and attend to nothing else, there would arise that confusion which the Apostle Paul censures in the Corinthians. [1 Cor. xiv.] They forget apparently that *no* prayer can

Knox, the Reformer of the Scotch Church, was so far from taking for granted that every Minister must be well-qualified to compose suitable Prayers, that he actually compiled a Form for the use of his Church. But he left it *optional* with each Minister to use this Form or not. He overlooked—what one may wonder did not occur to him—the probability, or rather certainty, that *every* Minister would be ashamed to proclaim (by using that Form) his own deficiency in ‘the gift of Prayer,’ and that consequently every one of them whether well qualified or not, would prefer resorting (as in practice they always do) to his own extemporaneous effusions. For when a permission has been given, it would be absurd to expect that none would use it except the best qualified and most discreet.

And Knox also overlooked those other advantages of a fixed Liturgy which have been just mentioned.

possibly be the extemporaneous effusion of any except the *one person* who utters it.

If any one delivers in the Congregation an extemporé prayer, in the name of the rest, those who adopt it, and mentally join in it, are in fact using a Form of prayer framed by another, just as much as those who make use of our Prayer-book. It may perhaps be a prayer less deliberately and carefully composed than those that are printed in that book; but be it better or be it worse, it manifestly cannot be the really-extemporé prayer of the whole Congregation, but only of the one person who utters it. The rest are praying—if they really are praying at all—in another's words, just as much as any of us.

Consider then, very carefully and humbly, what are the advantages you possess in what relates to the Public Worship of God; and how heavily accountable you will be if you fail to make good use of those advantages. You are invited to assemble with your christian brethren in the Saviour's Name, with his gracious promise that He will be in the midst of you in Spirit, and that your petitions will be listened to with favour.

And our Church has provided a Form of Service which, though we are not bound to regard it as perfect, or as incapable of improvement, may fairly be reckoned at least equal, if not superior, to any other, ancient or modern, extant in any language.

You will be better employed in carefully studying it, and trying to make a good use of it, than in listening to cavilling critics, who seek to show their ingenuity by raising objections, and looking out for faults, and perhaps fancying faults where there are really none. Listen not to such persons as Paul describes [2 Tim. iv. 3], who ‘heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears.’ Let not such persuade you that more piety is shown, and more edification gained, by frequenting irregular Meetings, and listening to self-appointed teachers, who may perhaps be more conceited and self-confident than well-qualified—than in a devout attendance on the services of our venerable Church.

Take care therefore not to ‘forsake the assembling of yourselves together.’ Let no trifling plea of convenience stand in the way of your attendance. And take care to

make such arrangements in your household as not to throw any hindrance in the way of any of the members of it. Attend also punctually in point of time, and with decent reverence, in point of demeanour. And strive to fix your thoughts and feelings on the work you are engaged in, that you may pray heartily with your fellow-Christians, and may have good reason for trusting that your gracious Lord will fulfil (as Chrysostom has expressed it) 'the desires and petitions of his servants, as may be most expedient for them: granting you in this world knowledge of his truth, and in the world to come, life everlasting.'

LECTURE VII.

Celebration of the Lord's Supper.

THE Apostle Paul censures very strongly the disorderly and irreverent behaviour of some of the Corinthians in their divine worship; saying 'Ye come together not for the better, but for the worse.' [1 Cor. xi. 17.] And he tells them that those who treat the Lord's Supper like a common meal,—and a meal taken indecorously, and so, eat and drink '*unworthily*'—that is, in a manner unsuitable to the holy Ordinance and unworthy of the occasion,—'eat and drink condemnation* to themselves.' They sin, he tells them, in 'not considering the Lord's body;' that is, not regarding the bread and wine that are received as the symbols or signs appointed by Himself, of his body and blood.

Although it cannot be said that all Chris-

* That was anciently the sense of the word 'damnation,' which did not imply *eternal* condemnation.

tians now are as reverend and decorous in their demeanour at public worship as they ought to be, there is certainly no danger now—especially at the celebration of the Lord's Supper—of such gross irreverence as that which the Apostle was censuring. But both at the Lord's Supper, and in *all* attendance on public worship, a man is bound to examine himself in the manner the Apostle directs; that is, to ask himself whether he is seriously and sincerely disposed to worship God in spirit, or is merely going through an empty form, without any real devotion. For, this is the *self-examination* which it is plain Paul is speaking of.

His admonitions however, and those of our Church, (whose words are borrowed from his) have perhaps had the effect with some persons, of tending to keep them away from the Lord's Table altogether; or at least, of supplying an excuse to those who are unwilling to attend. They are afraid of not being fit to partake of the holy ordinance, and of partaking 'unworthily,' because they cannot think themselves already as good Christians as they ought to be;

supposing that this Sacrament is designed for none but persons of pre-eminent virtue and holiness. But their falling into this error is surely not the fault of the Apostle, or of our Church, but of those who so perversely misapply what these have said.

The Apostle, in the passage just alluded to [1 Cor. xi.] does not advise the Corinthians to abandon the celebration of the Lord's Supper; but on the contrary speaks of the express command of Christ in a manner which leaves no room to doubt that he considered all Christians as absolutely bound to obey it. Only, he warns them to celebrate the Ordinance decently and devoutly, and not with profane negligence, and with forgetfulness of the true character and signification of it, as 'showing the Lord's death till He come.' And that this thoughtless negligence is what he means by '*unworthily* receiving,' you may see very plainly if you look to the passage in that Epistle.

In all this the language of our Communion-Service agrees with that of the Apostle.

Now would it not be absurd and perverse

for any one to reason thus: 'I am directed to perform this duty carefully and reverently, to the best of my power; and therefore I will not perform it all: I am warned not to profane Christ's Ordinance, and therefore I will abstain from it altogether?'

You would think it most unreasonable, if you gave a servant or a child directions to perform any task, charging him to do it carefully and well to the best of his power; and he should thereupon reply that he would not do it at all, and that you could not expect it of him.

Doubtless this Holy Sacrament would be very far from being of any benefit to any one who should receive the same 'unworthily' in Paul's sense of the word; that is, with profane negligence and thoughtlessness, and with irreverent disorder. And the same might be said of any one who should be living in any known sin, and had no intention of forsaking it. But such a person would not be saved from the consequences of disobeying *one* of God's commands, by disobeying another also. As long as he is leading a life of sin, he is under the dominion of the Evil one, who

will hereafter claim him as a subject of his own. The way to escape this doom, is not by the forsaking of God's Ordinances, but by forsaking sin, and turning, with hearty repentance to the Saviour.

If you will but be at the pains of attentively reading the Service for the administration of the Lord's Supper, and also the Church Catechism, you will see that it requires neither any extraordinary learning nor great ability, nor yet any great length of time, to make the preparation that is required. In the Catechism, the answer to the question 'What is required of those who come to the Lord's Supper?' is, 'To examine themselves whether they repent them truly of their former sins, steadfastly purposing to lead a new life; have a lively faith in God's mercy through Christ, with a thankful remembrance of his death; and are in charity with all Men.'

You will see that in this, and also in our *Communion-Service*, you are not called on,—if you have been hitherto leading a careless or an irreligious, or sinful life—*first* to pass a long portion of time in strict obedience to God's laws, *before* you can be a

fit partaker of the Lord's Supper; but to come to Him at once, and obey first the very first divine command that presents itself; imploring his pardon for your sins, and begging for his promised grace in the very way He has appointed; since *without* that grace you *cannot* reform your life, nor live according to his will. The Prodigal Son, in the Parable, does not, you will remember, *wait* till he is better clothed and in a better condition, *before* going to his father; for so, he might have waited for ever; but as soon as 'he comes to himself,' he resolves at once to 'arise and go humbly to his Father,' who alone was able to clothe and to relieve him.

And beware of the mistake of supposing that it shows a praiseworthy *humility* to stay away from the Lord's Table as unworthy. It is rather a mark of arrogant presumption, to trust in God's favour without regarding the conditions on which it is offered. If you are not *good enough* to obey his commands, how can you be good enough to disobey them, and yet to obtain his mercies? If you are really humbled by a sense of your sins, can you resolve to add another

sin to the list,—that of disregarding Christ's command, who said 'Do this in remembrance of Me?' And can there be any real humility in venturing to abide his judgment, without applying for his mercy in the way He has Himself directed?

Those who celebrate this holy Ordinance in the manner our Church teaches, do not approach the Table in confidence of their own worthiness, but with an humble confession of their unworthiness; trusting only in the merit of Christ's atoning Sacrifice. And to do this, does not surely look like proud self-confidence. Consider but the words in which the Minister invites the Communicants: 'Ye that do truly and earnestly repent you of your sins, and are in love and charity with your Neighbours, and intend to lead a new life, following the commandments of God, and walking from henceforth in his holy ways; Draw near with faith, and take this holy Sacrament to your comfort; and make your humble confession to Almighty God, meekly kneeling upon your knees.' After which there follows an humble confession of our sins; and to impress this the more strongly on the

minds of the Congregation, the Minister is directed afterwards to offer up in their name a prayer in which he says, 'We do not presume to come this thy Table, trusting in our own righteousness, but in thy manifold and great mercies. We are not worthy so much as to gather up the crumbs under thy Table.'

Now, no one who reads with any attention such passages as these, and also all the rest of the Communion-Service, can really think that our Church designed this Ordinance for persons confident of themselves, and pretending to possess the highest religious excellence, and to be something superior to what is expected of Christians generally.

But there certainly is in many people's minds a belief,—or at least something of a lurking suspicion,—that any one who receives this Sacrament, is taking on himself a *new* obligation which did not lie on him before; and that he is bound from thenceforth to lead a much more virtuous and what is called *strict* kind of life, than is required of any one who keeps away from the Lord's Table.

Now you may easily perceive on a little reflection what a mistaken and groundless notion this is. Christianity is not *two* religions; the one for Communicants and the other for Non-communicants. It is one Religion: 'There is one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one hope of our Calling;' and it would be absurd for any person to think that by staying away from the Lord's Supper he could obtain Heaven on some different and easier terms than the rest;—that by neglecting *one* of our great Master's commands, he could be *exempted* from obeying other commands. To commemorate the atoning Sacrifice of Christ is one of his injunctions; and the 'Word which He has spoken, the same shall judge us in the last Day.'

If any one looks even to that very warning exhortation in our Prayer-book which is supposed to deter many from attendance, he will see that we are there called on to 'repent of our sins, to amend our lives, to trust in our Saviour, and to be in charity with our neighbour; and so shall we be *meet partakers* of those holy mysteries.' Now can any one think that he

can be a partaker of immortal life, *without* all this?

You are not therefore at all *more bound* to lead a christian life, *after* you have received the Lord's Supper, than you *are* already; because you are *already* fully bound to that; and you cannot be more. But you will, it may be hoped, be the more *likely*, through divine help, to lead a christian life after devoutly receiving this Sacrament; because you will have been using one of the appointed means of grace; —of that grace without which we cannot attain holiness of life. Nothing more will be *required* of you than *is* required now; but there will be a better hope of your *fulfilling* what is required.

Yet plain and evident as appears all that has now been said, if any stranger from a distant Country coming among us, were to observe the crowds that are pouring out of most of our churches—generally the far greater part of the Congregation—just when the Lord's Supper was about to be administered, he could hardly fail to conclude that there are with us *two* religions, of one of which that Ordinance forms a

part, and not, of the other. He would see that the very persons coming *out* of the church must have *some* sense of religion, or else they would not have been there at all; but he would suppose that those who stayed, must be persons of a *different* religion. Surely there must be something very wrong, and very dangerous, in such a state of things.

As for the doubts and difficulties which beset the minds of some persons, or which they plead as an excuse, there is hardly any one who could not find some christian Minister, able, and ready, and glad, to afford such explanations as might be needed. But in truth, the New-Testament, together with the Communion-Service itself, will afford explanation on most points, to any attentive reader. He can there see plainly that the Ordinance is not (as is erroneously represented by the Romish Church) a *fresh sacrifice* of Christ—of Him who, we are expressly told, ‘offered *one sacrifice* of Himself which is to last for ever;’ [Heb. x.] but is a feast on that one Sacrifice, in memory of it; answering (as Paul expressly tells us,) to the Jewish partaking

of the flesh of the Paschal Lamb: 'Christ our Passover,' he says, 'is sacrificed for us; therefore let us keep the feast;' and 'as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do *show* the Lord's death.' As for the Words of the Saviour 'This is my body,' it is plain his Disciples could not possibly have understood Him to be holding his own literal body in his own hands; but they would naturally and rightly understand Him to be speaking of a *representation* or symbol of his body; even as He had been saying not long before, in explaining his Parables, 'the Seed *is* the Word of God;' and again, 'the harvest *is* the end of the World; the reapers *are* the Angels;' and so in many other places. It is manifestly in the same sense that the bread at the Sacrament *is* the Lord's body, and the Wine, his blood.

And He Himself explains [John vi.] that what He is speaking of is his life which He gives for the life of the world; and also that by our eating his flesh and drinking his blood, He means the receiving of his Spirit; for 'it is,' says He, 'the Spirit that quickeneth [giveth life]; the flesh profiteth nothing.'

And you may observe how closely our Prayer-book conforms to Scripture; in never speaking of our offering a fresh sacrifice of Christ, who 'made by his own oblation of Himself, once offered, a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice, oblation, and satisfaction for the sins of the whole World.' And to guard still more strongly against error on this point, the Communion-Service speaks of three kinds of Sacrifice which (in a figurative sense) we do offer up: the Sacrifice (1) of our Alms;* (2) of our 'praise and thanksgiving;' and (3) of 'ourselves, our souls and bodies, to be a reasonable, holy, and lively [living] sacrifice unto God.'

If any one is disposed to say, how can there be any spiritual efficacy—any benefit to the soul—in the bread and wine administered in the Eucharist, or in the Water used in Baptism, he should be reminded that though these material substances have no such virtue in themselves, there is much spiritual efficacy in an humble trust in God's promises, and ready obedience to his

* 'To do good, and to distribute, forget not; for with such *sacrifices* God is well pleased.'

commands. When we do perceive any effect naturally and actually following from the use of the means employed, there is then no exercise of faith. If, for instance, you take Opium to allay pain, or to procure sleep, or if you apply a healing ointment to a Wound, there is in this no trial of faith. And if the Water of Jordan in which Naaman was told by the Prophet to wash, had had a natural virtue for curing Leprosy, or if the Water of the Pool of Siloam had been naturally efficacious for curing blindness, there would have been no trial of faith to Naaman, or to the blind man to whom our Lord gave sight. But if Naaman had persisted in his refusal to wash in the Jordan, and the blind man had not washed in the pool, as he was directed, they would not have been cured. To believe the divine assurances then, and then only, when they concur with our own experience and the evidence of our senses, and to obey the divine commands only when we understand the reason of them, is to make God's word go for nothing. But the faith which is required of us is to believe in, and to comply with, what we have good reason to

believe comes from God, when we *do not* understand why He has declared and enjoined what He has.

I have said that our Prayer-book conveys, incidentally, much useful instruction in christian doctrine. But the celebration of the Lord's Supper is peculiarly instructive, from the very nature of the institution.

If our Lord's death had been merely an instance of Martyrdom, and He had died, as Stephen and many others have done, merely as bearing witness to the truth, there could not have been instituted any such Feast on a Sacrifice as we now have. We might have commemorated his death, as we do that of Stephen, and of John the Baptist, by meeting together to pray for grace to follow a good example ; but no one would, in that case, have thought of any such thing as partaking of the symbols of his flesh and blood. No one would dream of so *partaking* of anything representing Stephen's or John's body and blood. But in the Lord's Supper, we not only *break* the bread and *pour out* the wine, so as to '*show* the Lord's death,'—the wounding of his body and the shedding of his

blood,—but we *partake* of these ourselves ; just as both Jews and Pagans of old partook of the flesh of the sacrifices. This plainly represents to us that Christ's death is to be understood as an atoning *Sacrifice*, and not as a mere martyrdom. And such was manifestly his design, and what his Apostles plainly understood it to be.

We have here, therefore, in the very institution of this Ordinance, a plain proof—much plainer than any single sentence to that effect—that Christ was indeed crucified *for us* as a sacrifice.

Why, and how, this Sacrifice was necessary for Man's Redemption, is nowhere explained in Scripture. This would doubtless have been revealed to us, if it had been possible and suitable for us in our present state here below, to understand it. But as it is, the fact, without any explanation, is all that is revealed ; and we are bound reverently to take it on trust on God's assurance, without presuming either to explain what He has thought fit to keep unrevealed, or again, to reject the truth because we *cannot* explain it.

Come therefore humbly and thankfully

to the Lord's Table ; and that not once or twice in a year, or once in your life ; but habitually. And in confessing your sins before God, on that occasion, forget not to confess with sincere repentance, the sin (among the rest) of your past neglect, if you have hitherto been guilty of such neglect, of your Blessed Master's gracious invitation.

LECTURE VIII.

Family Prayer.

IT was pointed out in a former Lecture that neither of the two duties—that of private devotion and that of Public-worship—ought to be neglected ; and that there are special reasons for each of them, and Scripture injunctions for both. But there is a third branch also—that of Domestic Worship—which ought not to be omitted, in any case where it can be practised. And yet it is strangely neglected by some, who are not without a sense of religion, and who do not neglect Prayer altogether.

Domestic or Family-prayer, is in some respects *intermediate* between the other two branches. It is of the character of *private* devotion, thus far, that each particular family may have some *particular* blessings to return thanks for, or to petition for,—and some particular dangers to pray against, that do not concern others.

And again, it so far agrees with *public* worship that it seeks for the blessing promised to those who are *assembled* in Christ's Name, and 'agree together touching something they shall ask.' For this reason therefore it cannot,—any more than Public Prayer,—be the really extemporé effusion of each individual, since (as was remarked in a former Lecture) no prayer *can* be thus extemporaneous except to the one person who utters it. In the private prayer of an individual, he may either use a precomposed form of words, or he may express himself in his own words occurring to him at the moment; but when several *unite* in prayer,—whether many or few—then, whether the person who utters the words makes use of a form composed by another, or his own, all the rest, if they really *join* in prayer with him at all, must be joining in the use of another's words.

Domestic Prayer tends, among other things, to draw closer together the bonds of family-kindness, and to promote mutual love and concord in a household. There would not perhaps be so much as there too often is, of domestic bickerings, and petty jea-

lousies, such as trouble the peace of some families and do hurt to the souls of the members of them, if they were accustomed to meet together once or twice every day, to read together a portion of Scripture, and pray, *for*, and *with*, each other.

There are extant many books of prayers for family use; several of which, and also several of those in our Prayer-book, may very suitably be used, where the Head of the family sees reason to prefer these to any that he could draw up for himself.*

There are also several books of Notes and Comments on Scripture, extant, from some of which you may read such explanations or remarks as may be the most suitable for your little domestic circle.†

In reading portions of Scripture, either by yourself, or with your family, it will be advisable not to confine yourself (as some

* In the Appendix (B) I have inserted a few, by various hands, selected from Collections which have been in use in several families.

† The *Catechist's Manual* by Bishop Hinds, contains very useful comments on the portion of Scripture to which it extends. But it is designed not so much to be read aloud just as it is printed, as to furnish the *substance* that may be *expanded* orally by the person using it.

do) to the Lessons for the day, appointed for the public Church-service; and not to confine yourself to *Chapters*, as if the division into Chapters had been the work of the inspired Writers; instead of its being (as it is) a division introduced long after their time, merely for the convenience of reference. The mistake here alluded to (which is no uncommon one) will be in some degree guarded against, if you often begin and end your reading in the midst of a chapter, according as the sense and subject-matter suggests. And many parts of Scripture will thus be better understood than if each chapter were regarded as a distinct treatise, or a distinct argument, or portion of narrative. For, it happens in many instances, that the break between two Chapters takes place in the very middle of an argument, or even in the middle of a sentence.

To take one instance out of a multitude, the 11th Chap. of 1 Cor. begins with the conclusion of the sentence which is begun in the close of the 10th Chap: 'Be ye followers of me . . .' evidently relates to what the Apostle had just been saying; as you

will easily perceive if you look to the passage.*

And in your family-reading of Scripture, (as well as in your private study of it,) it will be best not to take one day a passage out of one book, and another day out of another; some out of the Old Testament and some, out of the New; but to go through one entire Book, continuously;—one of the Gospels, for instance, or one of the Epistles;—going on from time to time at the place where you had left off, till you have gone through the book you had begun. This will afford a much better prospect of the Scriptures being profitably understood, than when read in unconnected fragments.

One of the many great advantages to be derived from Family-Prayer, is, the oppor-

* Among many other instances of this, you may notice it

At the end of the 19th and beginning of 20th Matt.

”	”	24th	”	”	25th	”
”	”	2nd	”	”	3rd	John.
”	”	18th	”	”	19th	Acts.
”	”	7th	”	”	8th	Rom.
”	”	10th	”	”	11th	1 Cor.
”	”	12th	”	”	13th	”
”	”	3rd	”	”	4th	Coloss.

tunity it affords of gradually training *Children* to habits of devotion. Prayers may be drawn up, such as grown people can very suitably join in, yet plain and simple enough for children to understand and follow, before they are capable of sufficiently understanding the public Church-service; and prayers so short as not to exhaust or weary their attention; which would be, to them, far more hurtful than profitable, and would produce habits just the contrary of what we should endeavour to form in them. For if there is created in the mind an association of irksome tediousness with religious exercises, or again, if a habit is acquired of superstitious formalism—the uttering or hearing of the *words* of prayer, while the understanding and the heart are not at all engaged in it,—much more harm is done, than good.

On this point,—the endeavour to form good religious habits in a child,—some well-intentioned persons fall into most hurtful mistakes, from not considering in what way it is that habits are acquired.

It might seem unnecessary to remind any one that ‘what you practise, that you will

learn.' But so it is, that many persons seem to expect to learn one thing by practising another very different thing. What misleads them is, that they speak loosely of being *accustomed* to such and such a thing, and forget that two persons may have been both of them conversant about the very same *objects*, and yet may have acquired opposite *habits*, from being accustomed to *act* in opposite ways.

Suppose, for instance, that there is in your neighbourhood a loud bell that is rung very early every morning to call the labourers in some great manufactory. At first, and for some time, your rest will be broken by it; but if you accustom yourself to lie still, and try to compose yourself, you will become in a few days so *used to it*, that it will not even wake you. But any one who makes a point of rising immediately at the call, will become so *used to it* in the *opposite* way, that the sound will never fail to rouse him from the deepest sleep. Both will have been accustomed to the same bell, but will have formed opposite habits from their contrary modes of action.

Thus the custom of being present at

public worship, with an earnest and devout attention to the Service, tends to cherish a habit of devotion; but the oftener a person is present at a Service which he does not attend to, the more he will acquire of a habit of inattention to that Service. And those who have been made familiar with the words of Scripture, without being accustomed to attend to the meaning, or to bring its lessons into practice, will acquire a habit of such unprofitable reading.

Such habits are often acquired in childhood, by those who have been habitually brought to church at a very early age, before it was possible for them to take part in, or to understand what was said: and who have used the Bible as a mere reading-book; or have been accustomed to read it as if there was some virtue in the mere act of perusal. And these will have, in after life, a troublesome and difficult task in unlearning such a habit. This difficulty is created by the course pursued by well-meaning friends, whose wish is to *accustom* them early to pious exercises, and who overlook that obvious truth, that 'what you practise, that you will learn;' and that you

cannot learn one thing by practising another quite contrary to it.

In the smaller affairs of daily life, hardly any one ever commits such blunders as are often made in the most important matters. Every one would see, for instance (to recur to the examples given just above) the absurdity of expecting that by being accustomed to hear a bell, and to lie still at the sound, he would acquire the habit of immediately rising whenever it rung.*

Yet it is the practice of some, not only to make young children repeat forms of Prayer that are,—to them—a mere sound without sense, but sometimes even to make the *punishment* for some fault consist in being set to learn by heart some Collects or some portions of Scripture; as if that were not the very way to create in them a disgust for Religion, and an association in their mind of Prayers and Scripture with suffering and disgrace. It certainly is not

* As the subject here touched on is of great importance, and is one on which differences of opinion exist, I have subjoined in Note (A) at the end of this Lecture an extract from an Annotation on Bacon's 50th Essay, relating to the subject.

the way to bring them to regard Prayer as a *privilege* and a pleasure, or to delight in the study of God's Word.*

When very young children are brought to Church long before they can join in, or understand what is going on, and as early as it is possible to keep them quiet during the Service,—and when this is done through necessity, by parents who would else be obliged to stay at home themselves to take care of them,—the evil—for such it surely is—must be borne with. But it is not a thing to be sought and desired as good, when it can be avoided, to form a habit,—as this is likely to do—not of earnest devotion, but of inattention, and of either painful weariness, or superstitious formalism. And there is reason to suspect that some of the irreligion, and some of the superstitious lip-service of which but too much may be found among grown persons, may be partly traced to the injudicious course pursued with them in childhood by those who sought

* On a like erroneous system it is,—or lately used to be—the practice in some Colleges, to punish a young Student for any offence, by sentencing him to an increased attendance at Chapel!

to give them habits of early piety, and who unwisely took the most effectual way of defeating their own object.

It is very much to be wished that our Church would provide (what is provided, I understand, in the Moravian Church) a special public service for children;—for children, that is, of such an age as to be qualified to take part in *some* public Worship, but for whom our Liturgy is neither short enough, nor plain enough. The language should be very simple: suited to their tender years; and the whole Service, including prayers, singing, and Sermon,* should not exceed half an hour. For either *inattention* (which is likely to become a habit) or a painful *straining* of the attention, must be alike very hurtful to the youthful mind.

In the absence of any such public Service, the more care should be taken to suit

* Some of the parishioners of Halesworth may perhaps remember a Confirmation that was held there above 25 years ago by their former Rector; at which the Addresses to the young persons confirmed did not occupy much more altogether than ten minutes; and were perhaps more profitably remembered than a long discourse would have been.

the Family-prayers in the Child's home, to the capacity, and to the feelings of children. And when they attend along with you, either public-worship or domestic, let them always see in you an *example* of earnest and devout attention.

And from an early age, all parents,—and others who have the care of children should train them also to the duty of *private* devotion; not in the ineffectual, and worse than ineffectual, mode, so often employed, of setting them to learn words by rote; but by explaining to the child as well as they are able, that there is an unseen Being who can and will hear their petitions if offered up from the heart, and who will not despise their youth and ignorance, but said, when on Earth in bodily person, ‘Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not.’ At a very early age, a child of no more than ordinary intelligence, may be gradually taught, with patient and gentle kindness, that God gave him life, and every thing that he enjoys, and is ready to ‘give good things to them that ask Him;’ and that he must pray to Him for help, that he may

be good, and may be guarded from sin, and may be brought hereafter to a happy place where he will meet again such dear friends as he may have loved on Earth, and never part with them any more.

If any one living in what is called a christian Country could be too ignorant to teach his child those simple rudiments of Religion, and introduction to the practice of Prayer, it would be high time that he should—for his own sake, as well as for the child's,—seek anxiously for that instruction which he so much needs. And few, I trust, would fail to find, if sought for in earnest, such help, from some Clergyman or other Christian, in training his children as well as himself in the knowledge of what things we ought chiefly to pray for, and how we should pray for them.

Any but a very unnatural parent seeks carefully to have his children taught whatever may be most serviceable to them in after-life in this world; and would eagerly seize any opportunity that might offer, of having a child of his properly introduced to some kind and powerful patron willing and able to provide for him most amply.

He would never let such an opportunity be lost for want of care and exertion on his own part, or through any ignorance which he had it in his power to remove.

If therefore you have any real regard for your Children, and true and hearty faith in your Redeemer, you will not fail to introduce them, as you best can, to that Heavenly Patron who alone is able to provide for them in eternity. You will labour, for them and for yourself, not merely 'for the meat that perisheth, but for that which endureth unto Everlasting Life.' And you will join, daily, with them and the other members of your household in offering up your supplications and thanksgivings to Him who has declared that 'where even two or three are gathered together in his Name, there is He in the midst of them.'

APPENDIX (A).

NOTE.

Referred to in Page 146.

A VERY common practice may be here noticed, which should be avoided, if we would create a habit of studying with profit—that of making children *learn by rote* what they do not *understand*. ‘It is done on this plea—that they will hereafter learn the meaning of what they have been thus taught, and will be able to make a practical use of it.’ But no attempt at economy of time can be more injudicious. Let any child whose capacity is so far matured as to enable him to comprehend an explanation,—*e.g.*, of the Lord’s Prayer—have it *then* put before him for the first time, and when he is made acquainted with the meaning of it, set to learn it by heart; and can any one doubt that, in less than half a day’s application, he would be able to repeat it fluently? And the same would be the case with other forms. All that is learned by rote by a child before he is competent to attach a meaning to the words he utters, would not, if all put together, amount

to so much as would cost him, when able to understand it, a week's labour to learn perfectly. Whereas, it may cost the toil, often the vain toil, of many years, to unlearn the habit of *formalism*—of repeating words by rote without attending to their meaning ; a habit which every one conversant with education knows to be, in all subjects, most readily acquired by children, and with difficulty avoided, even with the utmost care of the teacher ; but which such a plan must inevitably tend to generate. It is often said, and very truly, that it is important to form early habits of piety ; but to train a child in one kind of habit, is not the most likely way of forming the opposite one ; and nothing can be more contrary to true piety, than the Romish superstition (for such in fact it is) of attaching efficacy to the repetition of a certain form of words as a charm, independent of the understanding and of the heart.

‘ It is also said, with equal truth, that we ought to take advantage of the facility which children possess of learning words : but to infer from thence, that Providence designs us to make such a use (or rather abuse) of this gift as we have been censuring, is as if we were to take advantage of the readiness with which a new-born babe swallows whatever is put into its mouth, to dose it with ardent spirits, instead of wholesome food and necessary medicine. The readiness with which children learn and remember words, is in truth a most important advantage if rightly employed ; viz. if applied to the acquiring that mass of what may be called *arbitrary* knowledge of insulated facts, which *can only* be learned

by rote, and which is necessary in after life ; when the acquisition of it would both be more troublesome, and would encroach on time that might otherwise be better employed. Chronology, names of countries, weights and measures, and indeed all the *words* of any language, are of this description. If a child had even ten times the ordinary degree of the faculty in question, a judicious teacher would find abundance of useful employment for it, without resorting to any that could possibly be detrimental to his future habits, moral, religious, or intellectual.'—*Annotations on BACON's Essays*, pp. 516-518.

APPENDIX (B).

FAMILY PRAYERS.

THE following Prayers, by various hands, are selected from several collections, which have been in use in various families. It is hoped that some of them at least may be found useful in many a Domestic Circle.

It will be seen that some of them are designed for particular days, and others for any day equally: some, for Morning, or for Evening; and some for either. Each Head of a family may easily make such selections, and arrangements, and (if needed) alterations, as he may find most suitable for his own Circle.

PREFACES.

To be used if required before the Prayers.

1. **L**IFT up our hearts to Thee, O God, and draw off our thoughts from the cares and concerns of this world, that we may fix them on Thee, the Almighty and everlasting Author of all things.

2. O God, our Creator and Protector, graciously hear us thy creatures, who now presume to offer unto Thee our united praises and thanksgivings for all thy mercies.

3. Let thy Holy Spirit, O Lord, sanctify our hearts ; that no wanderings of thought may interrupt our devotions, and that no coldness and carelessness may deaden them.

4. Be present with us, O Lord our Saviour, as Thou hast promised to those who are assembled in thy name, and sanctify our hearts, that we may adore Thee, not in words only, but in sincerity and love.

5. Take from us, O Lord, all hardness of heart and carelessness of mind, that we may worship Thee and glorify thy name, not with our lips alone, but in spirit and in truth.

THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER.

I.

*Easter Day.***Preparatory Sentence.*

LET the light of this morning shine with heavenly brightness in our hearts, and let the sun, that brings to us the first day of the week, remind us that Jesus Christ is truly risen from the dead.

O LORD Jesus, who being in the form of God, didst humble Thyself to our mortal condition, and for our sakes endure death on the cross, we bless Thee for this thy atoning sacrifice, and we rejoice and triumph in the remembrance of thy glorious resurrection. May we learn from the sufferings borne by Thee the *Beloved Son*, that when our Heavenly Father sends any afflictions on us, this is not through unkindness or indifference to us his children. May we learn patience from thy example, and endure our trials with unshaken faith in Thee.

Increase this faith in us we pray Thee. Let this commemoration of thy resurrection which, after the example of thy Apostles—the eye-witnesses of thy

* As the resurrection of our Lord is commemorated not only on Easter Day, but on every Sunday (thence called the Lord's Day) this prayer may be used with propriety on any Sunday morning.

return to life—we observe to-day, keep us in the full assurance of our own.

Lift up our hearts to that inheritance of eternal joy, which Thou hast secured to those that truly love and obey Thee. Let not the fleeting and deceitful enjoyments of this life seduce us from the obedience we owe to Thee our King and Saviour; but keep us, by the grace of thy Holy Spirit, from the wicked and ungrateful folly of selling our birthright in heaven, for any of the pleasures which the world, the flesh, and the devil, offer us in exchange.

We acknowledge our weakness before Thee; we know that we can do no good thing without thy grace. Grant us, therefore, O Lord, a constant sense both of this our weakness and of thy readiness to help us in all troubles and temptations. May the remembrance of thy triumph over death, as on this day, prepare us to meet our own, not only with fortitude but with joy, in the assurance that Thou hast taken away its sting, and in the sure hope, that through the merit of thy sufferings, we shall live again in thy heavenly kingdom.

OUR Father, which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy Name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, As it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, As we forgive them that trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation; But deliver us from evil: For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory, For ever and ever. Amen.

II.

Sunday Evening.

O LORD our heavenly Father, look down, we beseech Thee, on us thy servants, who as Christian brethren, members of one family, are assembled together at the close of this first day of the week, to offer our united prayers and praises before Thee, remembering thy gracious promise in Christ Jesus,—that where two or three are gathered together in thy Name, there Thou wilt be in the midst.

We thank Thee for the great event which we have commemorated this day—the resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which we humbly look for our own. We thank Thee for the means of knowing and of doing thy will in Christ Jesus, which we of this family enjoy. But while we gratefully acknowledge these our high privileges—make us sensible, O Lord, not only of the weakness of our common nature, but of the faults which each one of us here *present* is most liable to fall into,—faults which may be concealed from the eyes of men, but which cannot be hidden from Thee; who knowest our most secret thoughts, and wilt be our righteous and unerring Judge.

We confess that while we acknowledge our belief in this awful truth, we are too often tempted to value overmuch the good opinion of the world,—to seek too earnestly for human applause and approbation,—and to study the appearance we make in the eyes of men, more diligently than the purity of our thoughts, words, and actions, in the sight of Thee our Father, who seest in secret.

Thou knowest how much we are beset by temptations to vanity, and worldliness, and hypocrisy, as well as to many other sins ; and Thou knowest how often we have yielded to them. Lord, pardon and deliver us, we beseech Thee ; and give us grace so to live, as we shall wish to have done when we are about to die ; and so to die, that we may partake of thy glorious resurrection in thy heavenly Kingdom.

In this cheering hope we commit ourselves to thy care this night, O heavenly Father ! May we rest in peace and safety, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

III.

Thursday Evening.

O GOD, our Maker and Preserver, our Redeemer and the Sanctifier of all who seek Thee ! we beseech Thee to receive our hearty thanks for all the blessings and privileges we enjoy in this life, but especially for those spiritual mercies by which we hope to attain to a better.

Conscious of our own advantages, we implore thy mercies, O Lord, for our fellow-creatures also, and especially for our relations and friends, and for all who have shewn kindness to us. We pray that they may enjoy in this life all those good things which Thou seest most fitting for them, and that after death, both they and we, having walked worthy our high calling in Christ Jesus, may meet, to part no more, in thy heavenly kingdom.

And not only for those who have befriended, but for those also who may in any way have injured us, we pray, beseeching Thee to give both us and them, grace to turn to each other with kindness.

We pray also for the heathen nations, who know not thy truth, that it may please Thee to send them the light of thy Gospel, and to make us, who are already blessed with it, the humble means of conveying it to them.

Open the eyes and touch the hearts, O God, of obstinate unbelievers ; and to those Christians who are living in error or in sin, or in careless indifference to thy will, grant thy Holy Spirit, that they may be awakened before their time of trial is past, and their coldness and impiety changed, through thy grace, into zeal and devotion to thy service. But while we implore thy mercies in behalf of others, we humbly pray against all hardness of heart, and blindness in ourselves ; beseeching Thee to pardon our sins, to confirm our repentance, and to strengthen our faith.* So praying, we commit ourselves and our friends to thy care this night.

* The following may be added here, by those, who like to mark Thursday as the day of the *Ascension*, being the fortieth after the day of our Lord's resurrection.

'O Lord Jesus our Saviour, who on this day in the week didst leave the world and ascend into heaven, grant that we may, in heart and mind, thither ascend, and seek those things that are above, where Thou sittest at the right hand of God. We know that Thou wilt return to us no more in bodily person until Thou comest to judge the world : grant us so to live *now* under the guidance of thy Spirit, that *then* we may rejoice at thy appearing.'

IV.

Friday.

O BLESSED and holy Jesus our Redeemer, we look up to Thee with the eyes of our faith, and thank Thee for the full and perfect sacrifice of Thyself, by which this day of the week has been for ever sanctified to us.

As sinners redeemed by thy blood, as fallen creatures, saved from eternal death by thy own death on the cross, we do not belong to ourselves but to Thee ; to Thee belong our souls and bodies, and all our powers ; and to live to Thee shall henceforth be our earnest endeavour ! As Thou didst offer Thyself a sacrifice for the remission of our sins, so it is our desire to offer up ourselves, daily and hourly, as living offerings, consecrated to thy service. Grant us true faith in thy promises of pardon and salvation ; and that we may not deceive ourselves by an empty and dead faith, may we find a hatred of sin daily growing in our hearts, and a sure evidence of our living in Thee, and to Thee, through the visible fruits of thy Spirit ; that so we may become a truly Christian household, sanctified by thy continual presence.

Thy Providence has collected us together, united us in various ways, and with various offices ; may we perform our duties to each other for thy sake ! May we bear with each other's faults and infirmities, while we are connected here together ; and when the hour shall come, for each of us to stand before thy judgment-seat, may we not be found guilty of having

thrown any hindrance in each other's path of christian duty. But do Thou make us instruments, O Lord, in the blessed work of checking the power of Satan in men's hearts, and of bringing them to Thee. So may we hereafter rejoice with eternal gratitude in Heaven, at having been enabled, by thy Spirit, to help forward one another in the way of salvation, and to enlarge thy kingdom in this world.

V.

Friday Morning.

O LORD our Saviour, who hast promised that when two or three are gathered together in thy name, Thou wilt be in the midst of them ; vouchsafe to accept from us who are now assembled before Thee, our morning offering of praise and thanksgiving.

We bless Thee that thou hast preserved us through the hours of darkness, and restored us to light and to active life again. But far more we praise thy holy name for the redemption of the world from sin, and misery, and death, through the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, offered up for sinful man on this, the sixth day of the week.

Thy revealed Word has declared that when all mankind were in darkness and ignorance which human reason could not clear up, and laden with transgressions which no man could atone for, Thou didst take our nature upon Thee in Christ Jesus, who lived on earth to be our perfect example ; and

who died on the cross to purchase pardon for our sins, and to open to us the gates of everlasting life.

O Lord, though we cannot comprehend the mysteries of thy love towards Man, suffer us not to be the less grateful to thy infinite goodness, because the ways of thy infinite wisdom are beyond the reach of our understanding ! And enable us to give the proof which Thou hast required, of our gratitude and our faith, by a diligent discharge of our several duties in the state of life to which thy Providence has called us. So may not thy blood, O Christ, have been shed in vain for us, through our disobedience or want of faith ! But as we believe that Thou didst die for us, may we strive, through thy grace, to live to Thee to-day, while it is called to-day !

VI.

Saturday Morning.

O GOD and heavenly Father ! the giver of all good, who hast graciously been pleased to bring us in health and peace to the beginning of another day, and to the end of another week,—to the day of thy Sabbath,* on which the works of thy creation for man were accomplished,—we humbly bless Thee for

* The word 'Sabbath' is applied by many persons to the Lord's Day,—the *first* day of the week—which has always been kept by all Christians from the earliest times, as a religious festival, in memory of our Lord's resurrection. But the only day that in *Scripture* is ever called *Sabbath*, is Satur-

these and all thy mercies. May we keep this day, and every day, holy to Thee; and may thy Providence preserve to us and to those most dear to us, (if Thou in thy wisdom seest fit,) such a measure of health and strength, both in mind and body, that we may be able to do our duty with cheerfulness, and to be useful to our fellow-creatures.

Keep us, O God, from falling into danger or misfortune, into sickness or sorrow, this day; but keep us (far more we pray) from falling into sin, through the violence of unruly passions, through the weakness of our corrupt nature, through the example and influence of wicked men, or the assaults and temptations of evil spirits.

We implore thy blessing on all our useful designs and innocent occupations, and in the exercise of our social affections. But Thou, Lord, knowest what is best for us, far better than we do ourselves; grant us therefore the things we pray for, only, if Thou seest that they will be good for us; that they will help us, or at least that they will not hinder us, in the way of salvation. If not, in thy mercy deny them to us! And whether it be thy will that we meet with success or with disappointment, with enjoyment or with suffering in this world, give us grace to profit by all thy dispensations, and to direct our hopes and affections to that never-ending happiness in the next world, which Thou hast promised to thy faithful servants through Jesus Christ.

day, the *seventh* day of the week. And it is still called in Latin '*Dies Sabbati*,' in Italian *Sabbato*, and in Spanish *Sabbado*.

VII.

Saturday Evening.

O ALMIGHTY GOD, the Maker of this world, of all that it contains, and of ourselves, thy latest work, we desire to thank Thee for all the blessings of thy creation, and most especially on this day, which Thou hast been pleased to call the day of thy rest.

As fallen and sinful creatures, we should have bewailed our creation ; but as creatures redeemed we rejoice in it, and bless Thee, our Redeemer in Christ Jesus. Sanctify us and all that we possess to thy service, that as thy servants of old kept this the day of thy rest holy, so our whole lives may be kept holy unto our Lord.

Pardon, O Lord, whatever sins we have ever committed against thy purity and holiness. Pardon us, if we have neglected to hallow thy holy name, not only by using it irreverently, but by thoughtlessness, or cold formality in prayer,—by going through our religious duties as an irksome task, and forgetting the high privilege we possess in being allowed to address Thee. Pardon us if we have forgotten to hallow thy great and holy name while enjoying thy blessings, or if we have followed our several callings without thought of, or reverence for Thee, ‘in whom we live, and move, and have our being,’ and through whose sanctifying Spirit alone they can be blest to us.

But when we pray for the guidance of thy Holy Spirit and increase of religious knowledge, for deliverance from sin and admission to eternal happiness, vouchsafe us a deep sense of the blessings we ask for, and enable us to perceive how trifling in comparison, are all worldly deliverances, and worldly enjoyments.

O, heavenly Father, whose Providence preserves us by day and by night, grant us thy protection through the hours of darkness, not only from bodily dangers, but from sin and from Satan, through our Lord Jesus Christ.

VIII.

A Morning Prayer.

ALMIGHTY and most merciful God, we come before Thee to offer up our thanksgivings and praises for thy protection through the night that is past. Day after day, and night after night, thy Providence has sustained us from our childhood until now. O renew our hearts with love and gratitude to Thee, the free and bounteous Giver of all good,—not only for the blessings of this life, but far more for the precious hope of eternal life which Jesus Christ has purchased for us by his death,—for the light of the Gospel, by which we are enabled to learn thy will,—and for the ever-present help of thy Holy Spirit,—to all who seek it,—under the trials and difficulties which daily beset our path.

We implore a continuance of these blessings, O Lord, on this day now before us. May we improve in holiness of life and of heart : and may we, in our several callings, remember that we are *thy* servants, and that we must give an account hereafter, of all that we do, or think, or say, in the daily course of our lives.

O, may we so use the means of grace which Thou hast been pleased to grant us in this world, that we may be able to give a good account at last, before Thee, our righteous Judge and most merciful Redeemer, Jesus Christ our Lord !

IX.

A Morning Prayer.

O HEAVENLY Father, who hast been pleased to preserve us of this family through the night that is past, to raise us up from sleep, and to bring us, with all our faculties about us, to the light of another day, we come before Thee to offer our united prayers and praises for these and all thy blessings.

May we ever remember, that it is in Thee we live and move, and have our being, lest we become like the beasts that perish, who enjoy thy bounties, but who cannot look up to Thee as the giver of them. We indeed know that it is Thou who hast given us life, and food, and clothing ; and we thank thy Gracious Providence with all our hearts, for these bless-

ings ; but far more we praise thy holy Name, for having redeemed us from sin, and misery, and death, by the sacrifice of our Lord Jesus Christ, and for having set before us the hope of eternal life through Him.

Sanctify thy blessings to us, O Lord, and let them not be turned into a curse, by our unthankfulness or neglect. We indeed can make Thee no return for thy benefits ; but we can show our love and gratitude, by keeping thy commandments,—and may thy Spirit enable us to give this proof of our gratitude to-day : May we be honest and upright in all our actions,—pure and holy in all our thoughts,—kind and forbearing towards each other,—patient and diligent in the discharge of our several duties,—as becomes those who presume to call Thee their Lord and Master.

X.

A Morning Prayer.

ALMIGHTY God, who hast taught us to call Thee our Father, to whom we owe our preservation each night, and whose mercies are renewed to us every morning, we thy servants come before Thee, to present our united offerings of praise and thanksgiving.

O Thou, who hast made this world and every inhabitant of it, and, it may be, thousands of other worlds besides this we dwell in, we acknowledge thy

power, thy wisdom, and thy goodness ! At thy word were all things created, and if it were thy will Thou couldst bring them to nothing in a moment. ‘ Lord, what is Man, that Thou so regardest him ?’ To Thee the nations are but as ‘ the drop of a bucket, and the small dust of a balance ;’ yet such, we know, is thy provident care of everything Thou hast made, that ‘ not even a sparrow falls to the ground without Thee !’ May this thought inspire us with entire reliance on Thee in all our dangers, and trials, and afflictions ! If Thou shouldst withdraw thy support from us but for a moment we should perish ! May this thought take from us all vain confidence in our own strength, or virtue, or prosperity.

But while we acknowledge our dependence on Thee for our daily life and all its blessings, we pray for a still deeper sense of thy saving mercies in Christ Jesus, for the blessings of our redemption, and for the hope of a happy resurrection through Him.

O Lord our Saviour, enable us, we beseech Thee, to give proof of our faith in Thee, and our gratitude for all these mercies, by doing thy will this day ; by striving, through thy promised help, to keep ourselves pure and upright in thought and deed ; patient and gentle, just and kind, in our intercourse with each other ; so that we may daily approach nearer to the example which Thou hast given us on earth, and to the fulfilment of thy glorious promises in Heaven.

XI.

A Morning Prayer.

O MOST gracious God, accept we beseech Thee the praises and thanksgivings of us thy servants, whom Thou hast raised up from sleep another day, and hast endowed with the means of knowing Thee, and the power of serving Thee.

Thy mercy, O Lord, is over all thy works, but we humbly and gratefully acknowledge the many blessings and privileges which we of this Age, and nation, and household possessors,—that we have been born in a Christian country, where we can enjoy the light of thy Gospel : [that we have been saved from the horrors of war, and pestilence, and famine :] that our daily wants are supplied by thy care, and our nightly rest ensured by thy protection.

Vouchsafe us a grateful sense of all these blessings, yet suffer us not to be proud of them, and to deceive ourselves with the thought that we have deserved them at thy hands ; still less, to turn with coldness and neglect from those who are not so happy or so prosperous as ourselves. And should it seem good to Thee in any way to try us with affliction, with sickness, or poverty, or any other crosses, suffer us not to murmur at our own lot, or envy that of others, but give us grace to improve under all thy dispensations, whether of joy or sorrow ; ever remembering that we shall have to give an account hereafter, of all that we *have* done, of all that we *shall* do this day, before Thee, O Lord, our righteous Judge,—terrible to those

who hear thy words and do them not, but the Saviour of those who strive, through thy grace, to live to Thee, and to follow thy steps.

XII.

An Evening Prayer.

O LORD GOD, who art long-suffering and full of mercy, who forgivest sin and hearest prayer ; we come before Thee to offer up our thanks and praises for all the blessings we have received at thy hands, not only through the day we have just passed, but through the whole course of our lives.

Grant us, O Heavenly Father, a deep and lively sense of any sins we may have committed this day, whether through wilful transgression, or through sinful ignorance of our duty. We deplore that spiritual carelessness, which too often leads us, while intent on the business, the troubles, the pleasures, and the gains of this present world, into the danger of forgetting that which is to come, and of being more watchful against temporal losses and afflictions, than against temptations to sin, which may be the ruin of us for ever.

Pardon, O Lord, whatever thou seest in us of this worldly-mindedness and indifference towards thy gracious promises ; and suffer us not to be thus foolishly and ungratefully blinded to our eternal welfare, and devoted to this world, but grant us such faith in thy Word, and love of thy promises, that we may set our

affections on things above, and lay up for ourselves treasure in heaven.

But while we strive to seek first thy kingdom and thy righteousness, give us grace to discharge our duty faithfully and honestly in all our worldly concerns, that with just confidence in thy goodness, we may cast off all our cares on Thee, who carest for us.

In this happy confidence, O Heavenly Father, we commit ourselves and all those most dear to us, to Thy protection through the hours of darkness. May we lie down to rest in peace with each other and with all our fellow-creatures, and in grateful reliance on Thee, who hast so loved the world, that Thou gavest thine only Son, that 'whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but should have everlasting life.'

XIII.

An Evening Prayer.

O GOD most merciful, who hast made Thyself known to us as our Creator and Protector, our Redeemer, and our Sanctifier ; we, thy servants, come before Thee at the close of another day, to return our humble and hearty thanks for all the blessings we have enjoyed in the course of it, but above all, for the light of thy Gospel, in which Thou hast revealed thy redeeming love to thy creatures.

We come before Thee, O Lord, conscious of having done many things which we ought not to have done,

and of having left many of our duties undone. Pardon whatever sins our conscience now reproaches us with, and pardon those too which we may have concealed from ourselves, and from our fellow-creatures, but which cannot escape thy all-seeing eye, and of which we must give an account before thy judgment-seat at the last day.

We acknowledge that our hearts are deceitful above all things, and that while we are ever ready to watch for, and detect, the faults of others, we are too apt to forget or to excuse our own. Forgive us, we implore Thee, this blindness of heart, and carelessness, and self-deceit ; and vouchsafe us true repentance, that repentance bringing with it amendment of life, to which Thou hast promised pardon and peace.

O heavenly Father, we humbly resign ourselves into thy hands, and implore thy protection this night ; preserve us, if Thou seest fitting, from all dangers, but most especially from the snares of that Evil One who is ever ready to seduce us from thy service. Defend us by thy Holy Spirit against his temptations, and restrain his power, and deign to strengthen us by faith in Thee against all his devices.

O Lord, we feel how great are these blessings which we have presumed to ask of Thee, but we ask them,—as Thou hast commanded,—in the name, and for the sake of thy Son, our Lord Jesus Christ.

XIV.

An Evening Prayer.

ALmighty God, 'in whom we live and move, and have our being,' and to whose goodness we owe all that makes life desirable to us ; we humbly thank Thee for all the means of comfort and happiness, for all the opportunities of instruction and improvement, which we have enjoyed this day.

We have been hearers of thy word,—make us, O Lord, doers of it likewise. We have been partakers of thy blessings,—give us grace to use them to our profit, so that both the study of thy holy Word, the good example of others, and every event, whether agreeable or painful, which befalls ourselves, may minister to our spiritual improvement.

Pardon, O Lord, whatever sins our conscience reproaches us with, when we look back on the day that is past ; and pardon us those sins also with which our dull conscience does not reproach us.

Thou knowest our peculiar trials and temptations, and our besetting faults, and Thou knowest also, whether we have resisted, or whether we have yielded to them. Open our eyes, that we, too, may see them as they are, and turn to Thee with true repentance.

Give us grace to reflect how great must be thy abhorrence of sin, since it required no less than the sacrifice of thy beloved Son to atone for it ; and humble us with a just sense of our own weakness, that, renouncing all self-confidence, we may be led by thy Holy Spirit to seek for pardon and acceptance with

Thee, only through the atoning sacrifice of our Saviour.

Yet while we trust entirely to his sacrifice for our salvation, suffer us not to deceive ourselves with the hope that we shall be saved in our sins ; but give us grace to forsake our sins, and to purify ourselves, even as Christ our Lord is pure ; so that He may present us before Thee at the last day, among his redeemed and faithful servants.

In this hope, O Heavenly Father, we commit ourselves to thy gracious care this night, beseeching Thee to preserve us, if Thou seest fitting, from danger or calamity, for Jesus Christ's sake.

COLLECTS.

THE following collects have been selected as being well adapted for ordinary use along with the preceding prayers.

The Fourth Sunday in Advent.

O LORD, raise up (we pray Thee) thy power, and come among us, and with great might succour us ; that whereas, through our sins and wickedness, we are sore let and hindered in running the race that is set before us, thy bountiful grace and mercy may speedily help and deliver us ; through the satisfaction of thy Son our Lord, to whom with Thee and the Holy Ghost be honour and glory, world without end. *Amen.*

The First Sunday after the Epiphany.

O LORD, we beseech Thee mercifully to receive the prayers of thy people which call upon Thee ; and grant that they may both perceive and know what things they ought to do, and also may have grace and power faithfully to fulfil the same ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany.

O GOD, who knowest us to be set in the midst of so many and great dangers, that by reason of the frailty of our nature we cannot always stand upright ; Grant to us such strength and protection, as may support us in all dangers, and carry us through all temptations ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany.

O GOD, whose blessed Son was manifested that he might destroy the works of the devil, and make us the sons of God, and heirs of eternal life ; Grant us, we beseech Thee, that, having this hope, we may purify ourselves, even as He is pure ; that, when He shall appear again with power and great glory, we may be made like unto Him in His eternal and glorious kingdom ; where with Thee, O Father, and Thee, O Holy Ghost, He liveth and reigneth, ever one God, world without end. *Amen.*

Ash Wednesday.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who hatest nothing that Thou hast made, and dost forgive the sins of all them that are penitent ; Create and make in us new and contrite hearts, that we worthily

lamenting our sins, and acknowledging our wretchedness, may obtain of Thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remission and forgiveness ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The First Sunday after Easter.

ALMIGHTY Father, who hast given thine only Son to die for our sins, and to rise again for our justification ; Grant us so to put away the leaven of malice and wickedness, that we may alway serve Thee in pureness of living and truth ; through the merits of the same thy Son Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Third Sunday after Easter.

ALMIGHTY God, who showest to them that be in error the light of thy truth, to the intent that they may return into the way of righteousness ; Grant unto all them that are admitted into the fellowship of Christ's religion, that they may eschew those things that are contrary to their profession, and follow all such things as are agreeable to the same ; through our Lord Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

The Fourth Sunday after Easter.

OALMIGHTY God, who alone canst order the unruly wills and affections of sinful men ; Grant unto thy people, that they may love the thing which

thou commandest, and desire that which thou dost promise ; that so, among the sundry and manifold changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed, where true joys are to be found ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The First Sunday after Trinity.

O GOD, the strength of all them that put their trust in Thee, mercifully accept our prayers ; and because through the weakness of our mortal nature we can do no good thing without Thee, grant us the help of thy grace, that in keeping thy commandments we may please Thee both in will and deed ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Fourth Sunday after Trinity.

O GOD, the protector of all that trust in Thee, without whom nothing is strong, nothing is holy ; Increase and multiply upon us thy mercy ; that, Thou being our Ruler and Guide, we may so pass through things temporal, that we finally lose not the things eternal : Grant this, O heavenly Father, for Jesus Christ's sake, our Lord. *Amen.*

The Sixth Sunday after Trinity.

O GOD, who hast prepared for them that love Thee such good things as pass man's understanding ; Pour into our hearts such love towards

Thee, that we, loving Thee above all things, may obtain thy promises, which exceed all that we can desire ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Seventh Sunday after Trinity.

LORD of all power and might, who art the author and giver of all good things ; Graft in our hearts the love of thy Name, increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness, and of thy great mercy keep us in the same ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Ninth Sunday after Trinity.

GRANT to us, Lord, we beseech Thee, the spirit to think and do always such things as be right-ful ; that we, who cannot do anything that is good without Thee, may by Thee be enabled to live according to thy will ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Tenth Sunday after Trinity.

LET thy merciful ears, O Lord, be open to the prayers of thy humble servants ; and that they may obtain their petitions, make them to ask such things as shall please Thee ; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

The Twelfth Sunday after Trinity.

ALMIGHTY and everlasting God, who art always more ready to hear than we to pray, and art wont to give more than either we desire, or deserve; Pour down upon us the abundance of thy mercy; forgiving us those things whereof our conscience is afraid, and giving us those good things which we are not worthy to ask, but through the merits and mediation of Jesus Christ, thy Son, our Lord. *Amen.*

HYMNS.

THOSE families who make use of Hymns will find that the following (by various hands), which are not very generally known, may be sung to common tunes.

Many very good Hymns, which are to be found in several cheap little Hymn-books, are for that reason not reprinted here.

THE LORD'S PRAYER.*

- 1 THOU to whom all power is given,
Here on earth, above in heaven ;
Jesus, Saviour, mighty Lord,
Be thy holy name adored.
 - 2 In our hearts all-sovereign reign ;
All the world be thy domain !
May redeemed man, we pray Thee,
Like th' angelic hosts obey Thee !
-

* This metrical paraphrase of the Lord's Prayer has been accommodated to the full development of the Gospel-scheme, which was only *begun* at the time when He taught the prayer to his first disciples.

- 3 Thou who dost the ravens feed,
Grant us all our bodies need ;
Thou in whom we move and live,
Daily grace sustaining give.
- 4 Pardon us, our sins confessing,
Keep us from afresh transgressing ;
May *we* pardon one another,
As becomes a sinning brother.
- 5 In temptation's dreadful hour,
Shield us with thy gracious power ;
From Satan's wiles our hearts defend,
Saviour, Comforter, and Friend !
- 6 Glory to Thee on earth be given,
Christ our king, the Lord of Heaven !
Glory to Thee, Great First and Last,
When this world, and time, are past
-

EVENING HYMN.

Air—Ar hydd y nos.

- 1 **L**ORD, that madest earth and heaven,
Darkness and light,
Who the day for toil has given,
For rest the night—
May thine angel-guards defend us ;
Slumbers sweet thy mercy send us ;
Holy dreams and hopes attend us,
This livelong night !

- 2 Guard us waking, guard us sleeping ;
 And when we die,
 May we, in thy mighty keeping,
 All peaceful lie.
 When the last dread trump shall wake us,
 Do not Thou, our Lord, forsake us,
 But to reign in glory take us
 With Thee on high.
-

HYMN.

From the German of Gerhard.

- 1 I SING the praises of thy name,
 O Lord, with voice and heart ;
 Thy works on earth I will proclaim,
 And in thy praise take part.
- 2 Who is it that has raised on high
 The glorious vault of heaven ?
 Who, from the genial earth and sky,
 Soft dew and rain has given ?
- 3 Who warms us 'mid the wintry snows ?
 Who guards us from the wind ?
 Who helps us, every fruit that grows
 In its due time to find ?
- 4 Who can the breath of life sustain ?
 And who, with mighty hand,
 Makes Peace to hold its blessed reign
 Over our native land ?

- 5 Lord, from thy hand all blessings flow,
All, all must come from Thee ;
Thou keepest us on earth below
From harm and danger free.
- 6 Thou know'st each secret doubt and fear
Which prompts the Christian's sigh ;
And Thou wilt mark each silent tear,
Though hid from human eye.
- 7 The void of life Thou dost supply
With thoughts and hopes of heaven ;
When Death shall close the mortal eye,
New life by Thee is given.
- 8 Why should we then each night and day
Our faithless tears let fall ?
O cast thy load of care away
On Him who cares for all.
- 9 Leave all things to his blessed will,
And let thy murmurs cease ;
So shalt thou tread—a pilgrim still—
Thy way in perfect peace !
-

CHRISTMAS HYMN.

From the German of Bogatzky.

- 1 **G**LORY be to God on high !
Earth and air repeat the sound ;
Angel voices echoing round
Breathe celestial harmony :

Human pomp and power decay,
Christ is born on earth to-day !
(*Chorus.*)—Hail the kingdom of our Lord !
Be his holy name adored ;
Raise on earth the joyful cry,
Glory be to God on high !

2 *Peace* to reign o'er all the earth !
Thou, the gracious Prince of Peace,
Com'st to bid all discord cease
With the day that gave Thee birth :
Reconciled to God above,
Men should live in peace and love.
Hail, &c.

3 God to man *good-will* doth show ;
Jesus, his beloved Son,
Has this day the course begun
Of his sojourn here below ;
God in Him this day has given
Life and light to us from heaven.
Hail, &c.

4 Glory be to God on high !
Christians, all your voices raise
In the angels' hymn of praise :
May thy reign, O Lord, be nigh !
May thy Gospel shed its light
On all those who walk'd in night !
Hail, &c.

HYMN.

From the German of Arndt.

- 1 **G**O and dig a grave for me—
All the ties of earth are riven !
Spent with toil, I soon shall flee
To the sweet repose of heaven,
Where the voices of the blest
Summon me to perfect rest.
- 2 Go, then, dig a grave for me,
Now my earthly course is closing ;
Let my pilgrim's staff still be
Near me in the grave reposing ;
And then lay my weary head
In that painless, dreamless bed.
- 3 Why should I make longer stay
In this shadowy vale of sorrow ?
Things that are our boast to-day
Vanish from us on the morrow—
Like the sand before the wind,
Leaving scarce a trace behind.
- 4 Let me, then, in peace depart—
Let me quit this world for ever !
Earthly pleasures leave a smart—
Time all earthly ties must sever—
And its charms are empty show,
Vain deceit, which ends in woe.

- 5 Then farewell, with all your light,
 Sun and stars, in splendour gleaming !
I must journey from your sight,
 To where distant orbs are beaming ;
Where your faint and feeble ray
Merges in eternal day !
- 6 You, who now in sorrow go,
 Farewell ! all my heart holds dearest !
Heavenly aid can soothe your woe,
 'Mid the griefs that press the nearest.
Weep not for the semblance vain,
Nought on earth can long remain.
- 7 Weep not that the hour is near
 When I burst my earthly prison—
That from error, shame, and fear,
 Doubt and gloom, I shall have risen—
That from hence I take my flight
To the land of endless light.
- 8 Weep not ! my Redeemer lives :
 Far above this world of sadness,
Faith still strength and comfort gives,
 Hope inspires my soul with gladness,
And the voice of Love I hear—
 ' Child of God, no longer fear ! '

'HEAVENWARD.'

From Schmolck.

- 1 **H** EAVENWARD our path still goes,
Sojourners on earth we wander,
Till we reach our blest repose
In the Land of promise yonder :
Here we stay a pilgrim-band,
There must be our *fatherland* !
- 2 Heavenward, my soul, arise,
For thou art a heavenly being :
Thou shouldst seek no earthly prize
When from this world thou art fleeing ;
Hearts with heavenly wisdom blest,
Can in Heaven alone find rest.
- 3 Heavenward ! Death's mighty hand
Guides me there to joy and gladness—
There, within that blessed land,
Victor over pain and sadness—
Christ himself has gone before—
Can *I* dread an unknown shore ?
- 4 Heavenward ! oh, heavenward !
There shall be my lot and treasure—
Let me strive my heart to guard
From each vain and worldly pleasure ;
Heavenward my thoughts must tend,
Till in Heaven my cares shall end.

'I AM THE WAY, AND THE TRUTH, AND THE LIFE.'

From the German of Arndt.

- 1 **A** MID life's wild commotion,
Where nought the heart can cheer,
Who points beyond its ocean
To Heaven's brighter sphere ?
Our feeble footsteps guiding,
When from the path we stray,
Who leads to bliss abiding ?
Christ is our only *Way*.
- 2 When doubts and fears distress us,
And all around is gloom,
And shame and fear oppress us,
Who can our souls illumine ?
Heaven's rays are round us gleaming,
And making all things bright,
The sun of *Truth* is beaming
In glory on our sight.
- 3 Who fills our hearts with gladness
That none can take away ?
Who shows us 'midst our sadness,
The distant realms of day ?
'Mid fears of death assailing,
Who stills the heart's wild strife ?
'Tis Christ ! our aid unfailing,
The *Way*, the *Truth*, the *Life*.

BURIAL HYMN.

From the German.

- 1 **T**HOU true and faithful one,
Farewell ! in peace depart
To Him who by his power alone
Has quenched Death's fiery dart.
To thy Redeemer's arms,
Opened in love to thee,
Go ! safe removed from life's alarms,
God's face thou soon shalt see.
- 2 Softly thou'st sunk to sleep
From trials rude and sore ;
Now the good Shepherd, with his sheep,
Shall guard thee evermore.
Thou who in God's own FIELD*
In humble faith liest sown,
Shalt one day rise to light revealed
In glory not thine own.
- 3 Thine earthly course is run—
Thou art gone hence in joy ;
Thy long day's work at length is done—
Thy recompense is nigh.
In tears we saw thee sow,
But e'en while yet 'twas day,
Thou reap'st that grace which now we know
Has wiped them all away.

* The burial-places in Germany are called 'God's Field,'
(Gottesacker).

- 4 No ear has ever heard,
 No human eye can see,
The bliss thy Father has prepared
 In priceless store for thee ;
For truth, in sunlike blaze,
 Shall burst upon thy sight,
And God shall lead thine eager gaze
 To worlds of endless light !

"Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed."

JOHN XX. 29.

- 1 **W**E saw Thee not, when Thou didst tread,
O Saviour, this our sinful earth ;
Nor heard thy voice restore the dead,
And wake them to a second birth ;
But *we believe* that Thou didst come,
And quit for us thy glorious home.
- 2 We were not with the faithful few,
Who stood thy bitter cross around,
Nor heard the prayer for those who slew,
Nor felt that earthquake rock the ground ;
We saw no spear-wound pierce thy side ;
Yet *we believe* that Thou hast died.
- 3 No angels' message met our ear
On that first glorious Easter-day,
"The Lord is risen, He is not here,
Come see the place where Jesus lay !"
But *we believe* that Thou didst quell
The banded powers of Death and Hell.

- 4 We saw Thee not return on high,—
And now, our longing sight to bless,
No ray of glory from the sky
Shines down upon our wilderness :
Yet *we believe* that Thou art there,
And seek Thee, Lord, in praise and prayer.

THE END.

